Fernand Braudel and the *Monde Braudellien* . . .

J. H. Hexter
Yale University

In 1949 a *thèse* in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of *Docteur ès Lettres* at the Sorbonne was published in Paris. It was 1,175 pages long.[1] It had no illustrations, maps, or graphs. Its author was a French scholar then forty-seven years old. His name was Fernand Braudel. The title of the *thèse* was *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Seventeen years later, in 1966, a revised and corrected edition of *La Méditerranée* in two volumes appeared, replete with tables, maps, graphs, and handsome illustrations, its length 1,218 pages.[2] Now an English translation of the first volume of the revised edition of *La Méditerranée* has been published.

The preface to the second edition begins as follows.

> It was with much hesitation that I undertook a new edition of *The Mediterranean*. Some of my friends advised me to change nothing, not a word, not a comma, arguing that a work that had become a classic should not be altered. But how could I decently listen to them? With the increase in knowledge and the advances made in our neighbouring disciplines, the social sciences, history books age more quickly now than in the past. A moment passes, and their vocabulary has become dated, the new ground they broke is familiar territory, and the explanations they offered are challenged.

And so we have a historical problem, one of those problems with which, according to Professor Braudel, historical investigation should start: What made *La Méditerranée* a classic in 1949? What makes its second edition a classic in 1972? For it stretches credulity to the breaking point to believe that an English commercial publishing house would undertake the translation and issue of a 1,200-page history book, unless it were a classic.

In terms of the view of history set forth in *La Méditerranée* and propagated by Braudel ever since, however, the historical problem we

[1]These include 1,160 pages of text, bibliography, and indexes; 15 pages of front matter.

[2]An accurate comparison of the length of the two editions is difficult, since the second edition considerably exceeds the first in number of words per full page of text, but allows space for maps and graphs lacking in the first edition. Nevertheless, the proportion of approximately four to five between words per page in the first edition and in the second far more than offsets the space given to maps and graphs. It indicates that the amount of text in the revised edition may exceed that in the original by 20 percent.

© 1972 by J. H. Hexter.

have just raised is a *question mal posée*. Or better, perhaps, a question raised out of order, too soon. It is a question that has to do with a mere event, and in Braudel's tiered or three-layered image of the past and of the way historians should deal with it, what has to do with events, the *événementielle,* is the least important layer, and the one to be dealt with last. The study of events gains whatever value it has (not very considerable in Braudel's view) only insofar as it rests on the two more substantial layers that underlie it. The base layer is what Braudel calls *structures*. In the case in point the *structures* are the *mentalités,* sets of mind, points of view, paradigms imbedded in institutions, durable organisms, that give French historical scholarship its particular posture and quality. Of its quality we may think it is the best and must think it is the most ecumenical in the world today. Of its posture we must say that it has been more successful than historical scholarship in any other nation in assuming a position that brings it into favorable and fruitful relations with the social sciences. In France those relations enrich the study of history and continuously confront the social sciences not only with the existence of History as a discipline but with its importance both intellectual and institutional for them. No need to point the contrast between France and the United States in this respect. Here the social scientists have been able to turn their backs upon History, and without vigorous challenge have tended to define their central problems in ways that spare them from thinking about history at all.[3] Of this nothing is more symptomatic than a phenomenon that Braudel himself observed. After the Second World War programs of "area studies" began to proliferate in American universities. An "area" is a large territorial and population group marked by major significant interrelations of some of its parts—shared economic level, political tradition, language, historical experience, religious outlook, social institutions, and so on. The purpose of area studies is to investigate such regions—Latin America, the Middle East, black Africa—in the round, "globally," bringing to bear on each the joint expertise of specialized social scientists. What Braudel noticed was that initially in the United States such clusters of area-studies experts often did not include a historian. In France such an institutional expression of an ahistorical view of the proper study of man would not have passed, as it did in the United States, without serious challenge. It would have had to deal with and confront two powerful institutions. One is a journal, *Annales: Economies, sociétés,*

[3]Throughout I have tried to make the distinction between history as the past and the study of the past, on the one hand, and History as a corporate activity of a group of professionals called historians, on the other, by using an initial capital in the second case. I am not at all sure that I have succeeded.

civilisations. Its chief directors were successively two historians, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel. The other is the now famous VI[e] Section, the sixth section or division of the Ecole pratique des hautes études: Sciences économiques et sociales. Its presidents, unthinkably from an American perspective, have been successively two historians, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel. Any inquiry into the structural relation of history to the social sciences in France must start with the *Annales* and the VI[e] Section.

I. Structures[4]

In 1929 Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, two history professors at the University of Strasbourg, founded the *Annales d'histoire sociale et économique*. They did not claim that their journal was an innovation. They believed that the study of history in France was in the doldrums, lagging far behind such study in Germany, England, and the

[4] I had neither the readily accessible materials nor the time to do an adequate job of research on the history of the *structures* under investigation. What follows in this first section should be considered rather as a sounding, subject to all the limitations that inadequate documentation involves and all modification that further investigation may require. The main documents available to me have been: (1) *Annales* from 1929 to 1972. Beginning in 1939, *Annales* underwent a number of changes of title until 1946, when it first appeared under its present title, *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations* (hereafter cited *Annales E.S.C.*). (2) *Vingt-cinq ans de recherche historique en France. (1940–1965)* (n.p.: Comité français des sciences historiques, n.d.). (3) *Rapport d'activité 1969–1970 et programme scientifique 1971–1974* of the Laboratoire associé no. 93 of the Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique (hereafter CNRS): the Centre de recherches historiques of the Ecole pratique des hautes études. (4) Ecole pratique des hautes études (EPHE), VI[e] Section: Sciences économiques et sociales, *Programme d'enseignement 1971–1972*. (5) Publication catalogs: (*a*) Collection: *Civilisations et sociétés* (Paris: Mouton & Cie); (*b*) *Publications de l'Ecole pratique des hautes études, VI[e] Section: Centre de recherches historiques, 1972–1973* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N.). (6) *Eventails de l'histoire vivante: Hommage à Lucien Febvre*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1953); announcement of *Mélanges en honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Paris, 1972). (7) The *Annuaires* of the VI[e] Section, 1956–71. I owe to Mr. Robert Harding of Yale University the acquisition of the data from the last-named source and its tabulation. I am also obligated to him for rapidly acquiring for and dispatching to me the items in 3, 4, and 5 above, and for doing the like with many of the works of scholars associated with the so-called *Annales* school. I am further indebted to him for illuminating conversations about the operation of the *Annales–VI[e] Section* enterprise. In this matter I am also indebted to my colleagues at Yale University, Raymond Kierstead, Robert Lopez, and Harry Miskimin. Mr. Miskimin also gave me useful advice on weighing some of the statistics in *La Méditerranée*. My wife Ruth Hexter compiled the statistics on the size and growth of several historical journals from 1929 to the present, identified the academic provenance of a score of contributors to the Febvre festschrift, and as usual gave a critical reading to this study. Mrs. Florence Thomas prepared the charts and devised the maps. I received financial assistance needed for my work from the Concilium on International and Area Studies, Yale University. Throughout this essay citations to Fernand Braudel's *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* will be to the second edition, 2 vols. (Paris, 1966); cited *Méditerranée*.

United States. What they saw as the retardation of historical work in France they ascribed to an institution, an attitude, and a deficiency. The institution was the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris, or more precisely the dominant historians of that faculty. Febvre called them *les Sorbonnistes*. For him the word became an epithet equivalent to *l'infâme*. In the interest of the advance of historical studies he felt it must be crushed. Febvre regarded the attitude of the *Sorbonnistes* as a symptom of the shrinking timidity of the France that emerged in spiritual disarray both from the debacle of 1870 and from the pyrrhic victory of 1914–18. The professors of the Sorbonne immersed themselves in political and diplomatic history, in the empty minutiae of those branches of history. They produced very large tomes on very small matters. Worse, as the trainers of succeeding generations of French historians they produced a progeny in their own image. For practical purposes the History faculty at the Sorbonne owned French History. It turned its back on all the new and exciting horizons that, so Febvre and Bloch believed, historians in other lands were discovering and exploring. This was the deplorable deficiency, the thinness, the malnutrition that the Historical Establishment, forgetting the great tradition of an earlier day, forgetting Guizot, Thierry, and Michelet, imposed on the study of history in France.

The goal of the *Annales* from the outset, therefore, was to undo the work of the *Sorbonnistes,* to turn French historians away from the narrowly political and the narrowly diplomatic, to turn them toward the new vistas in history, especially toward social and economic history. This was the *mentalité* of what came to be known as the *Annales* school of French historians, or the *Annalistes*. In a sense of the term that we will explore more deeply later, this *mentalité* became a *structure,* a controlling habit of thought so deeply imbedded in the minds of the believers that they scarcely subjected it to critical examination.

This *structure,* conceived by Febvre and Bloch, against considerable odds has taken over historical studies in France, at the same time winning for those studies worldwide admiration, something like a consensus that in History France is indeed Number One. The marks of the "new history" in France have been an indifference to political and diplomatic history approaching outright rejection and a wide-open hospitality to all other kinds of history, actual or imaginable. This has meant that for more than forty years what became the most powerful voices in the French historical profession have called on historians to keep abreast of the advances in the social sciences, or, as they would

insist, in the *other* social sciences, or better still, because wider open, in *les sciences de l'homme.*

In the 1930s Febvre and Bloch moved from Strasbourg to Paris, Febvre as professor in the Collège de France, Bloch as *maître de conférence* and finally professor of economic history in the Sorbonne itself. The *Annales* moved with them. In the war years it underwent many vicissitudes. Bloch went underground to work for the Resistance. The Germans captured and shot him. After the war, still under Febvre's direction, the *Annales* changed its full title. It was reborn and rebaptized as *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations.* In 1957 Fernand Braudel succeeded Febvre as editorial director of the journal and remained in control until 1968.

The Ecole pratique des hautes études is funded by the Ministry of Education, outside the framework of the French universities. "Its teaching program, resting on the results of the researches" of its teaching staff, "is oriented to the training of researchers."[5] Its structure, rules, and methods of recruitment are flexible, free from the regulations and the obligations to undergraduate instruction of the French university system. The plan of the Ecole looked to the establishment of six sections, three in the natural sciences, three in the *sciences humaines.* Before the Second World War a number of distinguished historians taught in the Ecole, among them Lucien Febvre and, in 1937, Fernand Braudel.

The seed for the VI^{e} Section of the Ecole pratique des hautes études, Sciences économiques et sociales, was planted in 1869, one year after the school itself. It was a long time taking root. In 1947, more than seventy-five years after it had got into the plans, the VI^{e} Section of the Ecole was finally inaugurated as a teaching and research organism. Its first head, the *président,* was not an economist or a sociologist or an anthropologist. The *président* was the historian Lucien Febvre. On Febvre's death in 1956, Fernand Braudel succeeded him as *président* and still holds that position.

It was a part of the credo of the *Annalistes* that as a science history would benefit by having some of its needs met by a laboratory. In pursuit of that purpose, within a year of its establishment the VI^{e} Section or its *président* established the Centre de recherches historiques. Fernand Braudel was its first director. A little later the CNRS (National Center of Scientific Research), the approximate equivalent of our National Science Foundation, began to provide funding for French research centers in the social sciences. That funding now assists about a dozen research teams and laboratories attached to the

[5]EPHE, VI^{e} Section, *Programme d'enseignement, 1971–1972,* p. 5.

VI[e] Section. Among them is Laboratoire associé no. 93. The director of the laboratory, an alias for the Centre de recherches historiques, is Fernand Braudel.

No doubt, then, that the *structure* of History that forty-three years ago began to develop in the hands of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre has imbedded itself in institutions to all appearance solid and durable—the *Annales,* the VI[e] Section, the Centre de recherches historiques. Still, to some American scholars these institutions may be little more than names; and above all other people, Americans are skeptical of the extent to which the assumption of a name is a clue to what lies beneath the name. What they usually would like is some evidence of substance, best a few confirming figures. Some figures are available. First the *Annales.* In a sense the *Annales* represents the periodical embodiment and expression of the *structures,* the durable paradigms about the nature of the historical enterprise, that were the program of Bloch and Febvre, inherited and continued by Braudel. Since 1929 some learned journals have expanded, some have shrunk, some have died, some have been born. Starting with the first year of the *Annales,* let us compare its growth with that of several leading French historical journals (see fig. 1).[6]

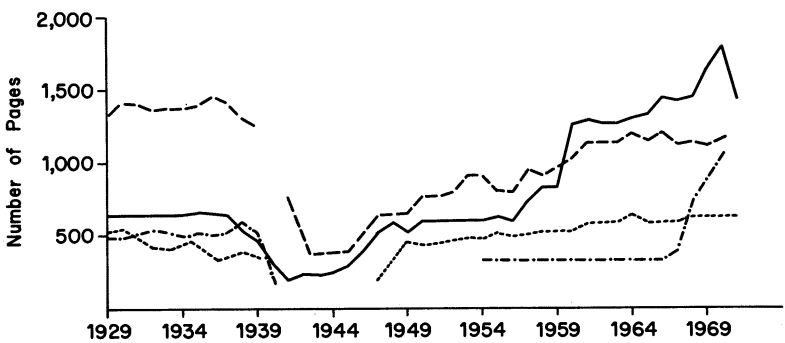

FIG. 1.—Growth of four French historical journals, 1929–71. Solid line =*Annales;* long-dashed line =*Revue historique;* short-dashed line= *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale;* dashed-dotted line =*Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine.*

For a new journal the *Annales* started large, larger than the *Revue d'histoire moderne* or the *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale.* It was, however, less than half the size of the old established *Revue historique.* It did not grow, it even shrank a little, in the years before

[6]Gaps in the graphs of some publications during the period of the Second World War simply indicate that the volumes for those years are not currently in the Yale University Library.

the Second World War. After the war it returned to its previous dimensions, as the *Revue historique* did not. The *Annales* did not begin to grow again until after the mid fifties. By 1960 it had almost doubled its original size, and ten years later had nearly trebled it. Far outstripping the *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* and the *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (new-founded and re-founded in 1954), in 1960 it passed the *Revue historique* in size, becoming the largest historical journal in France. It remains so today.

Now let us compare the growth of the *Annales* with that of journals published outside France, whose field of concern coincides with or overlaps the *Annales*. We have chosen one German, one English, and two American journals for comparison (see fig. 2).

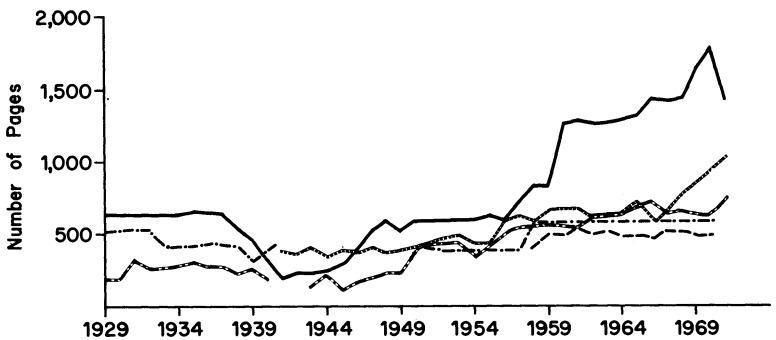

FIG. 2.—Growth of five journals of social and/or economic history, 1929–71. Solid line = *Annales;* long-dashed line = *Comparative Studies in History and Society;* line of squares = *Journal of Economic History;* dashed-dotted line = *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftgeschichte;* line of dashes and squares = *Economic History Review.*

Again the *Annales* was larger at its start in 1929 than the older German *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftgeschichte,* almost three times the size of the English *Economic History Review.* After its postwar refounding it was once, in 1954, overtaken in size by the American *Journal of Economic History* founded in 1941, but that was before the *Annales'* period of rapid growth. Both the English and the American journals enjoy over the *Annales* the advantage of being the publications of professional societies. The advantage has had its compensatory drawback. The range of the *Journal of Economic History* has shrunk in recent years until it threatens to become the house organ of the sect of the econometrists, capable of continued growth because in the boom years subscribers were too affluent and indolent to drop their subscriptions. Meantime a second American journal, *Comparative Studies in History and Society,* appeared in

1958. Its program has some of the spaciousness of the *Annales,* but since 1961 it has consistently remained one-third the size of the French review. The dominance of the *Annales* in its chosen field is unchallenged anywhere.

Granted what is evident, that the *Annales* has enjoyed a truly luxuriant growth since its foundation, another question will rise to perplex American historians: what has given that journal its continuity? What gives every reader of the *Annales* over the span of its years the sense that it has grown not by abandoning the path of the founders but rather by widening it? In the United States, where historical journals shed their editors and editorial boards the way a snake sheds his skin, if not quite as often,[7] continuity of specific purpose in editorial direction is just about impossible. Not so with the *Annales* (see fig. 3).

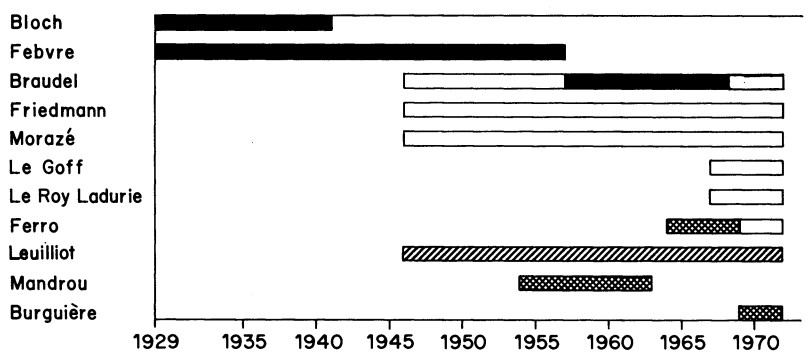

FIG. 3.—Staff history of *Annales,* 1929–72. Solid bar = editorial director; open bar = editor; shaded bar = secretary of the editorial committee; cross-hatched bar = secretary of redaction.

For the forty-three years of its existence the *Annales* has been under the editorial direction first of both, then of one, of its founders, and then of the successor of that founder. For the past twenty-five years, three historians—Braudel, Morazé, Friedmann—have continuously served on the editorial board of the *Annales,* and one historian, Leuilliot, has served as the secretary of the board. The continuity of outlook, the *structure mentale,* of that journal has been maintained by a truly amazing continuity of personnel in its editorial management. If one wants to put a revolution in the *structure* of history on a sound footing, there is no better way than to keep it under a continuing management for half a century.

[7]Always excepting the *Journal of the History of Ideas.*

The *Annales* may be thought of as the regular rhythmic pulsation of the "new history" in France. Irregularly but with remarkable frequency and with the aid of the Centre de recherches historiques, the VI[e] Section has published the books of historians who are working within the bounds of the *Annales* paradigm. Many of these books, though by no means all, are issued by that publisher of mysterious but convenient name, S.E.V.P.E.N.[8] The categories under which these works are published are a sort of guide to the preoccupations of the founders of the *Annales* and of its current editor: *Affaires et gens d'affaires; Archéologie et civilisation; Démographie et sociétés; Les hommes et la terre; Monnaie-prix-conjoncture; Ports-routes-trafics.* The bar graph in figure 4 does not do justice to the full range of support that the VI[e] Section has provided for the publications of historians. It only indicates those works issued by the Section and currently in print in the S.E.V.P.E.N. catalog.

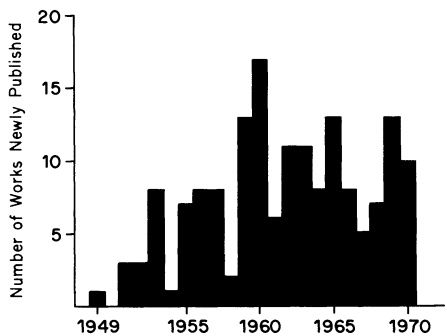

FIG. 4.—Historical books of the VI[e] Section issued by S.E.V.P.E.N., 1948–71

The total volume of VI[e] Section historical works in print at S.E.V.P.E.N. is impressive, 164 titles. If the publisher has been moderately assiduous in keeping the books in print, the increase in output in the twelve years to 1970 over the previous eleven has been more impressive, an average of ten per annum as against four. Unfortunately, data on VI[e] Section history books no longer in print at S.E.V.P.E.N. is not readily available.

Regardless of its political outlook the academic world is internally one of the most conservative of human institutions, a granitic *structure,* indeed. And of its many provinces the French academy has been

[8]Service d'Edition et de Vente des Publications de l'Education Nationale. Mouton & Cie publish the whole VI[e] series, *Civilisations et sociétés,* and Armand Colin publishes the *Cahiers des Annales.*

among the most conservative of the conservative. Injected into that rigid body about a quarter of a century ago, how has that odd organism, the VI^{e} Section, Sciences économiques et sociales, fared under the successive *présidences* of two historians? Unfortunately the publication of the *Annuaire* of the VI^{e} Section did not begin until 1956-57. From that date to 1971-72 annual figures on courses offered by the Section are available (see fig. 5).

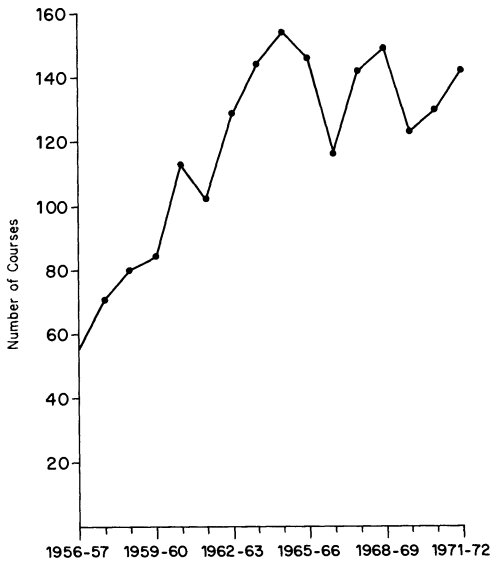

FIG. 5.—Number of courses offered by the VI^{e} Section, 1956-72.

Despite the ordinarily unpropitious climate and stony soil that the French academic world provides for innovation, in the past fifteen years the VI^{e} Section has made a place for itself and thrived. In the six years after the beginning of the *Annuaire* the VI^{e} Section more than doubled its course offerings. In the following years to the present, despite ups and downs offerings never fell below that doubled figure.

The teaching done in the VI^{e} Section should exemplify one of the central paradigms of the *Annalistes*, the opening of History out to the other social sciences. How has History gotten along in an academic milieu specified by law as Sciences économiques et sociales? Figure 6 shows how courses have been distributed among disciplines in VI^{e} Section since 1956-57.[9]

[9]The classification of courses is mine, as is the title "behavioral sciences" to describe a cluster of disciplines (sociology, anthropology, social psychology, linguistics, etc.) that would be so described in the United States.

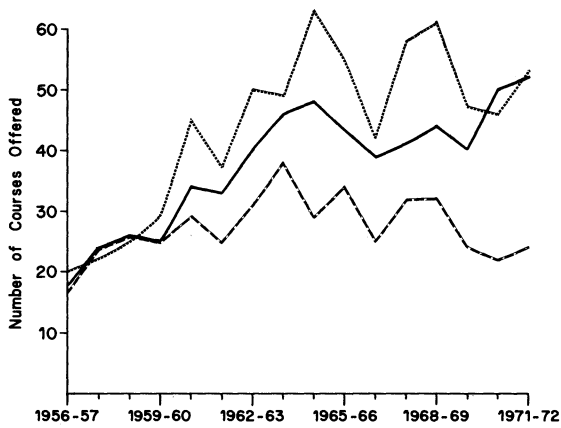

FIG. 6.—Fluctuation of courses offered by the VI[e] Section, 1956–72. Solid line = history; dashed line = economics; line of squares = behavioral sciences.

The growth of the three principal subject divisions of the VI[e] Section measured in numbers of courses actually offered indicates the good faith of the *directeurs d'études* in maintaining a balance among history, economics, and what in the United States would be called the behavioral sciences. The last have fluctuated more violently than the other two, however, perhaps an indication of exuberant but erratic youth. And since their peak in 1963–64 the offerings in economics have irregularly declined in number. A clearer picture of the quantitative relations between the subjects emerges if we plot their offerings as percentages of the total offering of the VI[e] Section in the years since 1956–57 (fig. 7).

From 1956–57 to 1969–70 the offerings in history remained a highly stable percentage of the course offerings of the VI[e] Section, starting at 32 percent and never dropping below 29 percent or rising above 34 percent. In its share of instruction in the VI[e] Section, economics has declined fairly steadily from 30 percent in 1956–57 to 17 percent last year. Whether in the VI[e] Section Febvre and Braudel succeeded in historicizing economics and the behavioral sciences it is hard to say. They certainly have succeeded in economicizing and especially in sociologizing History. History offers the greatest number of courses of any particular discipline, thirty-four in 1972–73 compared with eighteen in economics, the next largest offering. The persistent outreach of history to the economic and social sciences, a central paradigm of the *Annales* school, is firmly implanted in the History offerings of the VI[e] Section. Six seminars have *économie* or

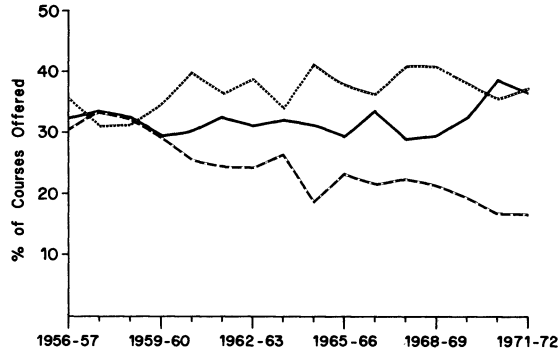

FIG. 7. – Fluctuation of percentages of courses offered by the VI[e] Section, 1956-72. Solid line = history; dashed line = economics; line of squares = behavioral sciences.

économique in their titles; sixteen *société* or *social*. Five more are entitled "Histoire et sociologie" of this or that area, and there are two history offerings on "Sociologie de la Grèce ancienne." However the social and economic sciences have fared under Braudel's *présidence* at the VI[e] Section, History has certainly held itself open to their influence.

The embodiment of the paradigms, the *structure*, of the *Annales* in a major section of a major school in the French educational system is a remarkable feat. By having an *Annales* historian (himself) put in charge of the Section of Economic and Social Sciences at the Ecole pratique, Febvre accomplished that maneuver so warmly recommended by military experts – seizure of the strategic heights (well, one strategic height). From that time on, as the VI[e] Section prospered, two notions still more or less alive in the United States were buried in France. The first is strong among American historians: interdisciplinary studies in the social sciences are unprofitable. The second thrives among social scientists engaged in interdisciplinary studies: History has no place in such studies. In France those notions would have come up against the hard reality of the VI[e] Section, dedicated to interdisciplinary studies and prospering under the direction of a historian.

Finally, the Centre de recherches historiques of the VI[e] Section. What does it do? Many things. To an elderly American like me, a handicraft historian, still capable of being astonished by historical enterprises on a colossal scale, the systematic inventories of information from large archival aggregations undertaken by the Centre are dazzling. For example, from the Florentine "Catasto" of 1427 the

Centre is reconstituting 80,000 families at the beginning of the fifteenth century.[10] The *registres de contrôle* of the troops of the era of the French revolution will provide information on "a *million* soldiers sociologically defined." From a fiscal series of 1810 comes a census for each *arrondissement* of 600 notables of the Napoleonic empire, 150,000 individuals, from which can be ascertained their professions, civil status, wealth, and number of children. The military archives of the nineteenth century will make possible horizontal studies of each annual class of conscripts and, of course, vertical studies of changes in their health, height, weight, place of origin, status, and trade. In 1970 among the inquiries on the way to completion were one on the history of agricultural production in France from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, one on French climate from 1775 to 1792, and one on buildings in Normandy and Paris from the fifteenth century to the French Revolution. Studies based on the 40,000 titles published in eighteenth-century France are providing statistics on the diffusion of culture and on historical semantics. An atlas will soon be published tracing the historical geography of the distribution of cereals, roots, fruits, and sugar cane over the face of the earth. Currently some thirty-five major projects are in progress at the Centre or with its aid. Its resources are put at the disposal of many scholars not permanently attached to it. Currently there are fifty-six scholars and researchers and twelve engineers and technicians from the CNRS on the Centre's permanent staff.

More convincingly than statements of corporate self-praise made by representatives of the *Annales* school of history (subject to suspicion of self-interest), the figures and graphs above provide evidence of the triumph of the *mentalité* of the *Annalistes,* of Bloch, Febvre, and Fernand Braudel. They warrant Jean Glénisson's summary of the current situation in his essay "Contemporary French Historiography": "Today—need one say it again—the historical conception of which the *Annales* is the most active champion scarcely leaves room for hostile or merely different trends." On the other hand the extraordinary range of instruction offered by the VI[e] Section, as well as the openness of the *Annales,* justifies Glénisson's apologia. "The ecumenical care that the successors of Lucien Febvre take to be fully aware of every point of view, whether revolutionary or merely innovative, has the consequence that every innovation is immediately sucked into the dominant current."[11]

[10] I assume, following the methods of family reconstitution worked out by Fleury and Henry, although it is not clear to me how that method can be applied to a *catasto.*

[11] Jean Glénisson, "L'historiographie française contemporaine: Tendances et réalisations," *Vingt-cinq ans de recherche historique en France (1940–1965)* (n.p.: Comité français des sciences historiques, n.d.), p. lxiii.

"The successors of Lucien Febvre," says Glénisson; but who are they? Although there are many heirs, many who enjoy the fruit of Febvre's thought and of his academic statesmanship, he has only one successor—Fernand Braudel. On Febvre's death it was Braudel who became the directing force at the two nerve centers of the "new history" in France—editorial director of the *Annales, président* of the VI[e] Section of the Ecole pratique des hautes études. And from the start in 1949, Braudel was jointly with Febvre, and then alone, director of the Centre de recherches historiques. In the establishment of the dominance of the *Annales structure* over the historians of France, there are three crucial moments: 1929, the founding of the *Annales;* 1946–47, its refounding by Febvre and the acquisition by that indomitable *frondeur* of the *présidence* of the new VI[e] Section; and finally, 1956–57, the succession of Fernand Braudel.

Niccolò Machiavelli, speculating in the *Discorsi* on the conditions for the well-being and survival of a commonwealth, observed that Rome prospered because its founder Romulus was followed by two successive leaders who directed it along the course it needed to follow. The intermeshed institutions we have been examining—a compact commonwealth under a single guiding chief and embodying a unitary *mentalité*—was fortunate in the succession of Fernand Braudel. Febvre was indeed a bit like Machiavelli's image of Romulus, powerful, domineering, fierce, pugnacious, a warrior, almost a brawler, at heart, who even set aside a section of the *Annales* for *Combats,* a man of ecumenical intellect but not of irenic spirit. Braudel was an academic statesman of more judicious temper. What were the consequences of Braudel's succession for the institutions that Lucien Febvre entrusted to his care? Precise data for the Centre de recherches historiques are not available to me. However, none of the enormous projects currently under way at the Centre seems to date from before 1957. The well-known works of Baehrel, the Chaunus, and Goubert may have owed something to the facilities of the Centre. The impression, however, is one of growth under Braudel both in the number and the dimension of the Centre's undertakings. As to the VI[e] Section, our accurate information starts at the moment of Braudel's accession to the *présidence*. Of its pattern of growth in earlier years under Febvre's guidance no evidence is at hand. We can say that the growth of the Section's teaching function has been spectacular under Braudel's administration. It is harder to double the size of a considerable operation than to double a small one. In the year Braudel took over, the VI[e] Section offered fifty-six seminars. Sixteen years later it offered 142. The evidence of the influence of Braudel shows most clearly in the expansion of the *Annales*. Twenty-seven years

after Bloch and Febvre founded it, and still in the latter's hands, the *Annales* in 1956 was almost exactly the same size as it had been in 1929. Three years later under Braudel its size had doubled. Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel have at one time or another unabashedly proclaimed themselves imperialists. Febvre's imperialism was mainly that of the mind. Braudel also operates with extraordinary success in another sphere, one about which he has written a book, the *civilisation matériel.*

Braudel did more than nurture the institutions that he succeeded to. He spread their influence beyond the bounds of France. Of this the qualitative evidence is abundant: the international fame of the *Annales* and of the VI^{e} Section, the hospitality that both extend to foreign scholars, the former in its pages, the latter in its seminars. Consider the issue of the American journal *Daedalus,* published last year, devoted to 'Historical Studies Today." Articles by eleven contributors. Three from members of one American department of history, the one most closely associated with the VI^{e} Section.[12] One by a Cambridge University historian who has researches in progress at the Centre de recherches historiques.[13] Three from *directeurs d'études* of the VI^{e} itself.[14]

From an adventitious source there is yet more impressive evidence of the internationalization of the *Annales structure.* In 1953 two volumes were published, *Eventails de l'histoire vivante: Hommage à Lucien Febvre,* with eighty-five contributors, one of them Fernand Braudel, who, one imagines, had a larger hand in the project than his introductory essay indicates. Figure 8 shows how those contributors were distributed geographically. One contributor, if indeed one, behind a curtain effectively iron in the last days of Stalin.[15] One from the United States, none from Germany, a cluster from bordering neighbors; from France, 80 percent.

This year a two-volume *Mélanges en honneur de Fernand Braudel* is to be published, 93 announced contributors. Figure 9 shows how they are distributed geographically. From France, 43 percent; none, oddly, from Brazil, where Braudel taught for two years; none, even more oddly, from the North African shore of the Mediterranean that he loved so well, not even from Algeria where he taught more than a decade. But 57 percent, fifty-three scholars from sixteen other lands,

[12]*Daedalus* (Winter 1971). Articles by Darnton, Stone, and Talbott of Princeton University.

[13]Ibid. Article by M. I. Finley.

[14]Ibid. Articles by Furet, Goubert, and LeGoff.

[15]I am not certain whether Constantin Marinesco lived in Rumania in 1953. His degree was from Paris.

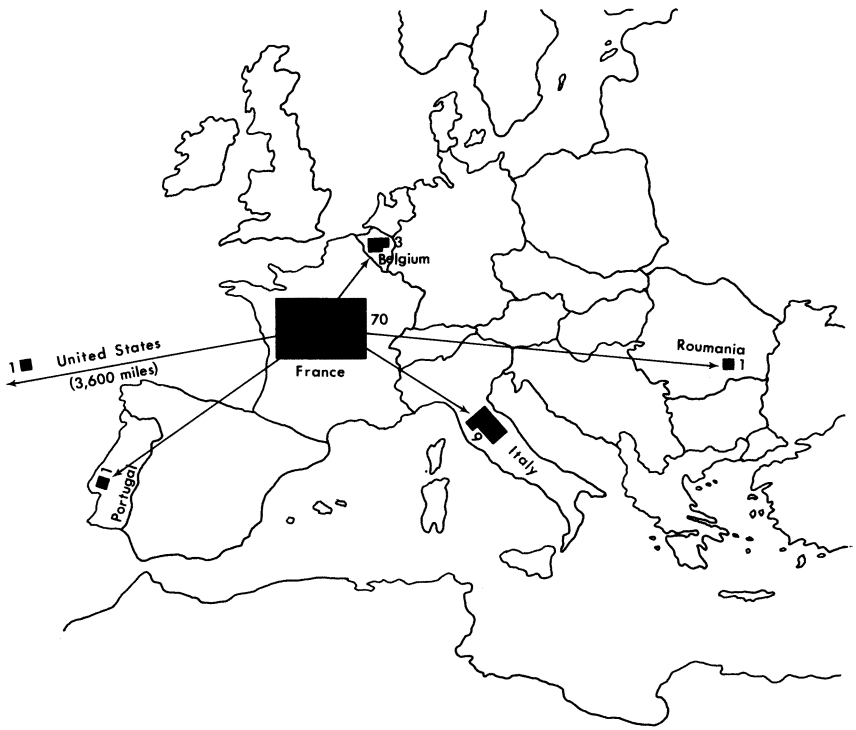

FIG. 8.—Distribution of contributors to *Eventails de l'histoire vivante: Hommage à Lucien Febvre.*

with large clusters from Hungary, Poland, and the United States. It is hard to look at the two maps without getting the eerie feeling that with a solid base in France and with Fernand Braudel in command, the *Annalistes* are on a march that by friendly persuasion is about to conquer the historical world.

Why, an American tends to ask, why France? Why not the United States, with its enormous resources, with the traditional collective outlook on history of its professional historians far less rigidly confined to national boundaries than any other equivalent group? Among certain American historians in the United States in the thirties and forties there prevailed a view similar in many respects to that of the *Annalistes*. And there were historians with the qualities of Febvre and Braudel. There was at least one such in my generation—Oscar Handlin of Harvard University. A historian of the broadest learning, deeply and early concerned to draw on the achievements of the social sciences. A historian who need not and would not shrink from a

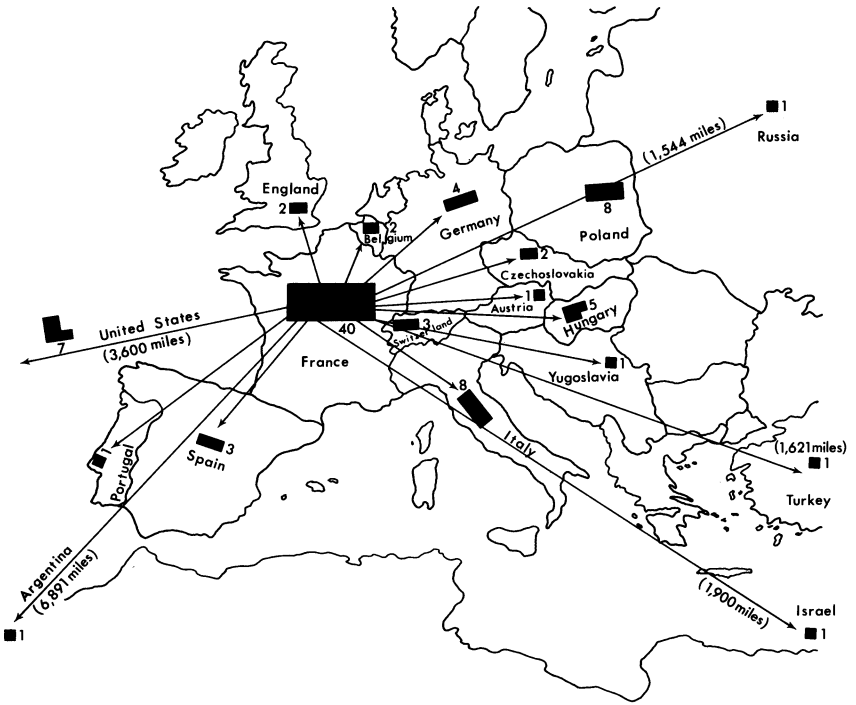

FIG. 9.—Distribution of contributors to *Mélanges en honneur de Fernand Braudel*

comparison of his scholarly work with that of Braudel. A historian, moreover, with an extraordinary command of languages and early linked by personal ties with historians of what may be called the Historical "international set." A historian, finally, with enormous energy and high administrative skills, an imperial vision, and not devoid of a proper ambition. Why, we may well ask, does Braudel serenely preside over a great school of historians, firmly based in Paris but spread throughout the world, while Handlin attends meetings of the American Historical Association to deliver public threnodies on the decay of History as a humane science and a profession in the United States?

In one of the most engaging chapters of *The Prince,* Machiavelli ponders the role of *Necessità* and *Fortuna* in human affairs. *Fortuna* is a bitch goddess who is likely to capitulate to an ardent assault. But not always. For *necessità,* the solid order of things, may not be favorable. It was favorable in France for the *Annalistes,* for Febvre and Braudel; there circumstances came to the aid of the vigorous. Consider by contrast what was lacking in the United States. First, no

tradition of historical journals that reflected the historical outlook of their editor, a tradition already created in France before 1900 by Henri Berr's *Revue de synthèse*. Indeed, for a long while no great editorial tradition at all in the United States, no truly outstanding editor of a historical journal since Franklin Jameson. In America, too, a parochial conception of science, that only slowly opened up to the social sciences, and did not open up to History at all. This became a matter of consequence with the establishment of the National Science Foundation. Up to the present, History receives no direct support from the NSF.[16] Up to 1966 there was no federal support at all for historical research. Only recently has the National Endowment for the Humanities been sufficiently funded to render more than nominal assistance to History. A historical project or two rode into NSF support on the coattails, so to speak, of sociology, but only because a sociologist applied for the assistance. Again a different situation from that in France, where exclusion of History (or even literature) from the *sciences humaines* was structurally improbable. Finally, the polycentrism of higher learning in America. In France who doubts where the center is? Paris. But in the United States—New York? Cambridge? Chicago? the Bay Area? but what about Ann Arbor, Madison, New Haven? Here again the heart of the matter was to concentrate in a capital of learning a critical mass of historians with a shared point of view or set of paradigms. The Programme d'enseignement of the VI^{e} Section for 1972–73 offers forty-nine research seminars in History, all inclined in the *Annaliste* direction. Where in the United States would one find an advanced History faculty of such dimension, not to speak of such shared inclination? Indeed where in the United States would one find a university ready to concern itself with the care and feeding of such a gaggle of advanced historical scholars? To achieve in the United States what Febvre and Braudel achieved in France was beyond the capacities of Handlin, beyond the capacity of any historian in the United States. It would, I believe, have been beyond the capacities of Febvre and Braudel. All the *structures* of the scholarly and educational enterprise that favored the *Annales* school in France were lacking in the United States. No bold historians seized *Fortuna* here, because there was no *Fortuna* to seize.

So that unique and successful intermeshing of History with the social sciences that Febvre and Braudel achieved in France was just not in the cards in the United States. The loss to History has been serious. To the social sciences it has not been negligible. Let that stony, sterile barrens, the *International Encyclopedia of the Social*

[16]Support is confined to the history of science.

Sciences, bear witness. It should not have happened anywhere. It would not have happened in the France of the *Annales,* the VI[e] Section, and Fernand Braudel.

II. Conjoncture

In historical studies conceptual apparatus, guide lines, general theories, *idées maîtresses* about the past and about the proper relation of historians to it tend to be far less lasting than institutions. They are phenomena of *moyenne durée,* middling-length affairs, and thus in Braudel's own historical schema belong in the second layer or tier of history, that of *conjonctures.* They even conform sometimes to Braudel's notion that non-economic phenomena have a rhythmic pattern similar to economic *conjonctures* or cyclical movements. Such was the implication of a remark of that merry skeptic Herbert Heaton: "Big ideas in history have a half-life of about five years." Without wholly committing ourselves to Heaton's Law we may note that with varying lengths the popularity curves of what, when they emerge, get called generative or seminal ideas in history have similar shapes: a rapid rise, around the peak a slow leveling of rate of ascent and beginning of descent, a more rapid falling off, and finally a fast downward plunge toward oblivion.

The first *idée maîtresse* of Braudel concerns the relation of History to the social sciences. In its protean form he shared it with and inherited it from the founders of the *Annales,* Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, especially the latter. Our previous examination of *structures* has shown how effectively he maintained, expanded, and strengthened the institutions designed to realize that idea. *La Méditerranée,* which launched him on his career as a central figure in French historical studies, also exemplified his concern to bring History into close relations with social sciences, especially human geography, economics, and sociology. In 1951, generalizing his outlook, he wrote: "For us there are no bounded human sciences. Each of them is a door open on to the entirety of the social, each leads to all the rooms, to every floor of the house, on the condition that on his march the investigator does not draw back out of reverence for neighboring specialists. If we need to, let us use their doors and their stairways."[17] No science of man must cut itself off from the other sciences of man, for in so doing it creates those falsifications—economic man, social man, geographic man. No, it is not with such ghosts that students of the *sciences humaines* must deal, "rather with Man living, complex,

[17] *Annales E.S.C.* 6 (1951): 491.

confused, as he is, . . . Man whom all the social sciences must avoid slicing up, however skillful and artistic the carving."[18]

In the years following 1951, and particularly in the years following his succession to the strategic positions held by Lucien Febvre in the *Annales* school, Braudel had to give further thought to the problem of the relation of History to the social sciences. By then two realities had commanded his attention. First, some practitioners of most of the other sciences of man did not share his appetite for roaming through the house of the social sciences. Although that house, like God's, had many mansions, most social scientists were satisfied to stay in their own room. Or in his other metaphor they went right on carving man up. The other reality was the opposite but also the consequence of the first, a propensity of each of the social sciences to enlarge its room. "Without the explicit will to do so, the social sciences encroach on each other; each tends to seize upon the social in its entirety. While believing that it stays at home each moves in on its neighbors."[19]

Such inner contradictions and confusions in the area of the sciences of man required resolution. Braudel was ready to propose, indeed even to impose, such a resolution. For the moment he wanted "a unification, even a dictatorial one, of the diverse sciences of man to subject them less to a common market than to a common *problématique,* which would free them from many illusory problems and useless acquirements, and after the necessary pruning and *mise au point,* would open the way for a future and new divergence, capable at that point of being fruitful and creative. For a new forward thrust of the sciences of man is in order."[20]

In this process of confluence and reflux what will be the place of History? On this point, no doubts or hesitations. History is the science of the sciences of man. Mingling with them, lending them its own impetus and its dialectic, it feeds itself on their multiple and indispensable movement.[21] Such is Braudel's view; such, he adds, is the view of those eager imperialists of the mind and the academy, "the young French historians, taking great pains to keep their craft at the junction of all the sciences of man," in short of the *Annalistes.*

The issue is not whether History is a science. On this matter Braudel and the *Annalistes* saw matters no differently from their scapegoats, the *Sorbonnistes* of the 1920s, equally firm in the con-

[18]Ibid.

[19]*Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 726.

[20]Fernand Braudel, "Histoire et sociologie," in *Traité de sociologie,* ed. G. Gurvitch, 2 vols. (Paris, 1958–60), 1:88.

[21]*Annales E.S.C.* 16 (1961): 423.

viction that History, as they practiced it, was *scientifique*. Here perhaps French historians were beneficiaries of a shade of linguistic divergence between their language and English. There appears to be a structural difference between the two tongues, well worth further investigation, that has made French *science* a more inclusive term than English "science." *Science* extends in the direction of "organized knowledge in general." "Science" tends to restrict its application to "those disciplines that take physics as a model." The trouble with the *sciences historiques* as they were practiced in France in the twenties was their isolation, a consequence of their isolationism. Fortunately the French had two phrases which might be used to break through History's isolation—*sciences humaines* and *sciences de l'homme*. It was harder in France to doubt that History was one of these than it was in the English-speaking world to deny that it was a "social science." In Braudel's view History must place itself not merely among the *sciences de l'homme,* but at their head or at least at their center.

If History is to take this place, it must not hang back and refuse to make use of the laboratory, the instrument that has been indispensable to the advance of the other sciences. And it must be ready to engage in "team projects," which in other sciences have so much accelerated their forward movement. Braudel, therefore, is ready and happy to toll the bell for the passing of *l'histoire artisanal,*[22] the history that is the work of individual craftsmanship, of the scholar working alone in his study with the books he has collected and the notes he has taken to deal with the problem which has captured his attention. Such craftsman-style History Braudel regards as a mode outmoded, no longer adequate for coping with the issues to which History must address itself, insufficient to *capter l'histoire de monde*.[23] For the new History a new sort of equipment is necessary, and a new organization of research, a scientific organization of cooperative research. The kinds of questions historians now want to ask are unanswerable by the traditional methods of the craft; the materials available for answering such questions are beyond the reach of traditional methods. Who can doubt it? For a great span of the nineteenth century there exist registers of induction into the army for every *département* of France. The registers yield information on the height, weight, and vocation of every man who was taken into the service. They also offer clues as to the health of the conscripts. Such a resource promises to enlighten us not only on the geographical

[22]For an early *Braudellisme* on this matter, see *Annales E.S.C.* 4 (1949): 192.
[23]Ibid.

cadres of French economic life but on the transformation of those cadres over time, and to provide us with materials for a biological history of the male Frenchman in the nineteenth century. So much was offered, but who would, could accept the offer. Not the traditional historian with his traditional craft methods, surely. His tools were too simple, his life too short. Yet the offer has been accepted, and many offers like it are being accepted not only in France but in England, the United States, Scandinavia, Russia, wherever the material and human resources to cope with such problems can be mobilized—and paid for. Problems of such dimension, materials of such extent and density, require a corresponding concentration and organization of resources—maps and computers; data-banks, laboratories, and research centers; programmers, cartographers, typists, consultants, researchers, and directors of research. This kind of History is work for organized, cooperative, directed investigations.

Surely this is true, and only a grumpy skeptic would deny the importance and the desirability of such organized research efforts. Yet to infer from their necessity and their success, the total obsolescence of the artisan-historian equipped only with pen, ink, industry, patience, curiosity, truculent individualism, and such brains as God gave him is perhaps premature. An old friend once told me how during the Second World War the physicists of the General Electric Atomic Research Laboratory were stuck by a problem the government had assigned them. For consultation they called in Enrico Fermi. He took a few instrument readings here and there and sat down with pen and paper. In two hours he had cracked the problem which had blocked the progress of the laboratory for two months. "Now," said my friend, "we would have solved that problem eventually. But it would have taken us three more months and two million dollars." History, of course, has no Enrico Fermi and never will have. It is not built like physics, and its necessary structure is a permanent constraint on the production of Fermis. On the other hand, compensatorily it tends to produce a considerable number of little Fermis, *fermetti,* so to speak, men who in their small way have the knowledge and the knack for keeping the historical operations that concern them from getting stuck on dead center, and for a long time marching in place. H. J. Habakkuk has offered a succinct sensible explanation why this should be so.

> In the past most historians . . . absorbed a large number of miscellaneous facts relating to the period in which they were interested or to problems very loosely defined. Their tastes were catholic and they did not accept or reject on any rigorous test of relevance to a hypothesis. They retained in their

minds an accumulating stock of information, as it were a compost heap, on which in due course ideas and generalizations burgeoned, as a result of reflection, flair, and intuition. This process is very haphazard, . . . but it has produced a great many penetrating insights, and it keeps the mind open to a wide range of considerations.[24]

This view cannot be written off as mere romantic and obscurantist individualism, certainly not by Braudel and the *Annalistes*. At the top of their historical honor roll stand two works, Marc Bloch's *La société féodale,* and Lucien Febvre's *Le problème de l'incroyance.* They were produced by methods wholly artisanal. Nor is it clear that the organization of a large cooperative apparatus would have eased their production or improved them. It might rather have got in the way or made the books too long—which they are not, as some of the recent products of the VI[e] Section certainly are.

Braudel's vision of the place of History in relation to the social sciences gives us a link with Braudel's second *idée maîtresse*—the conception of *durée*. Among sciences of man History distinguishes itself by being *globale,* "susceptible to extending its curiosity to any aspect whatever of the social." But it does not have a monopoly on this distinction; it shares it with sociology. What then justifies Braudel's unrepentant imperial claims for his discipline? He justifies them by relating them to History as the sole study linked to *la durée. Durée* does not mean time, but rather unit of time, duration.[25] In practice most sociologists, Braudel says, assume two postures toward *durée,* both in different ways stultifying. Some, intensely concerned with that convenient fiction "the present," are trapped in a unit of time too brief to afford them anything but ephemeral perceptions about man. They are prisoners of the *trop courte durée*. They miss the historical experience, so valuable for understanding the present, of displacement into an unfamiliar past that enables a man to know "those most profound and original traits of the present that he was unfamiliar with before, as a consequence of being too familiar with them."[26] Other sociologist-ethnographers, Lévi-Strauss, for example, are preoccupied with micro-units of social behavior—the phonême, the marital structure, the raw and the cooked—that endure multimillennially. They are prisoners of the *trop longue durée*. Between the instantaneously present and the perennially immobile of the two sociologies lie the effective *durées* that are the constant preoccupation of

[24]H. J. Habakkuk, *Daedalus* (Spring 1971), p. 318.

[25]Hereafter I will simply keep the term in its convenient French form.

[26]"Traits les plus profonds et originaux . . . que vous ne connaissiez pas à force de les connaître"; *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 737.

historians and that are History's unique and indispensable contribution to the sciences of man.

Braudel assimilates (although not explicitly) the *durées* that are the historian's business to the wave phenomena of physics. Thus radio transmission can be analyzed into waves of considerable length, carrier waves, bearing waves of lesser length, bearing waves of yet less length. In Braudel's view the past can be analyzed into the interrelation of waves of three lengths, and it can most effectively be written about that way. The first set of waves are short ones, those of *courte durée*. At least they are those first and most readily observed because they embody the experience "of daily life, of our illusions, of our immediate awareness." Because of their immediacy, they are the substance of the individual consciousness. Braudel, following the philosopher-economist Simiand (1873–1935), also calls them *événementielle,* having to do with events. "Events are explosive, 'resounding news,' as they said in the sixteenth century. With their deceptive vapors they fill the consciousness of contemporaries but they do not last at all." Although the most conspicuous, "the *temps court* is the most capricious, the most deceptive of the *durées.*"[27] It is the subject and the substance of the newspaper and in ages past of the chronicler. By preference the *courte durée,* the *événementielle,* is also the past that historians of politics, traditional historians, bury themselves in.

Economists and economic historians, on the other hand, frolic in waves of intermediate length—price curves, demographic progressions, movements of wages, changes in interest rates, *conjonctures,*[28] which follow cycles of ten, twenty-five, or at the limit fifty years. The notion of cyclical movements or rhythms can be extended from economic to social phenomena, and even beyond. Braudel presses for the

[27]Ibid., p. 728.

[28]There is no satisfactory English equivalent for *conjoncture*. Its English homologue "conjuncture" does not bear a similar sense. The difficulty can be illustrated from the choices the English translator made when he found the term in a chapter heading. Thus: "Navigation: tonnage et conjoncture" *(Méditerranée,* 1:271), translated: "Shipping and Changing Circumstances"; "Les responsabilités de la conjoncture" (ibid., 1:429), translated: "The Gold Trade and the General Economic Situation"; "La conjoncture italienne . . ." (ibid., 1:538), translated: "Italy's Situation. . . ." *Conjoncture* appears to be a term in one respect like "alienation," "confrontation," and "relevance." It started out with a reasonably bounded set of senses. Subjected to indecent abuse by masses of the intellectually chic, it acquired a precocious middle-aged spread. It has now become hard to discover what, if anything, a person has in mind when he utters it. Fairly consistently Braudel seems to use *conjoncture* to signify cyclical economic transformations or, less precisely, changes in society, sciences, technology to which he ascribes cyclic changes (undefined) over times (not clearly specified). I shall try in this essay simply to use the term *conjoncture* to label phenomena which conform to or at least do not lie beyond the phenomena that Braudel so identifies.

investigation of *conjonctures* in the realm of culture, "if one may extend to this domain, as I would gladly do, the expression which up to the present passes current only for economic life."[29] Although such waves of change exist and profoundly effect human affairs, men are not always aware of them. Their very length often conceals them from their victims. Recurring only a few times, sometimes only once in the lifetime of an individual, they often escape the consciousness of those who nevertheless live in and have to learn to live with them.[30]

The history of *conjoncture,* of historical rhythms of *moyenne durée,* fascinates Braudel.[31] But instead of turning him back to a search for the linkages between medium-wave and short-wave or *événementielle* history, it projects him forward on a search for historical waves of even vaster length. And he finds them. Before him, economists had spoken of secular (i.e., centuries-long) trends, but they had not much investigated them. Braudel, however, identifies in the past (and present) such "extremely slow patterns of oscillation, . . . movements [that] require hundreds of years to complete."[32]

Or again, in greater detail, beneath the waves of *conjoncture,* "phenomena of trends with imperceptible slopes appear, a history of very long periods, a history slow to take on curvature and for that reason slow to reveal itself to our observation. It is this that in our imperfect language we designate by the name of *histoire structurale.*"[33] Historical waves of great length constitute the *longue durée.* They belong not to the recurrent crises of *conjonctures* but to *structures.* Sociologists see structures as "fixed relations between realities and social masses," historians (or at least Braudel), as "a reality that time has a hard job wearing down, and carries a long while." Some structures "encumber history in impeding, and therefore commanding, its course."[34] They mark bounds, limitations that for centuries men cannot conquer or control. Such for example are the slow transformation from nomadism to transhumance and the movement of men out of the mountains to settle in the plain.[35] The

[29] *Encyclopédie française,* vol. 20, *Le monde en devenir,* fasc. 12, p. 9.

[30] In France the effective application of the economic conception of cycles to history was the work of Ernest Labrousse, who investigated the cyclical movement of prices in eighteenth-century France in his *Esquisse du mouvement des prix* (1933), and then in his *La crise de l'économie française à la veille de la Révolution* (1944) associated the economic crisis of the 1780s with the onset of the French Revolution.

[31] I am not sure, however, that he uses the term *moyenne.* He may, however. In the context of his views on *durée,* it seems so apt as to be irresistible.

[32] *Méditerranée,* 1:92.

[33] *Revue économique* 9 (1960): 41.

[34] *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 731.

[35] *Méditerranée,* 1:92.

history of the *longue durée* is the history of the constraints that *structure* imposed on human movement in the broadest sense of the word "movement"—not only migration but intellectual thrust and spiritual transformation.

As he loves the Mediterranean, Braudel loves the *longue durée*. It is the land where his heart lies, and the very last lines of his arduous revision of *La Méditerranée* are at once a confession of faith and a declaration of love.

> Thus confronted by man, I am always tempted to see him as enclosed in a destiny which he scarcely made, in a landscape which shows before and behind him the infinite perspectives of the *longue durée*. In historical explanation as I see it, at my own risk and peril, it is always the *temps long* that ends up by winning out. Annihilating masses of events, all those that it does not end up by pulling along in its own current, surely it limits the liberty of men and the role of chance itself. By temperament I am a structuralist, little attracted by events and only partly by *conjoncture,* that grouping of events carrying the same sign.[36]

Still, faith and love aside, Braudel knows that the *longue durée* is not the sole proper concern of the historian. "This almost motionless framework, these slow-furling waves do not act in isolation. These variations of the general relations between man and his environment combine with other fluctuations, the sometimes lasting but usually short-lived movements of the economy. All these movements are superimposed on one another." Superimposed, not separated. Rather, interpenetrating. The function of the historian, aware of the three *durées,* is to discern and set forth the dialectic that takes place among them.

Such, then, is Braudel's perception of the past: *événement—courte durée; conjoncture—moyenne durée; structure—longue durée;* and collisions, tensions, and interchanges of each with the others.

In calling the perspective of these superimposed *durées* to the attention of historians, Braudel was also setting forth a program, if not for adoption at any rate for serious consideration. It surely was not an accident that his fullest systematic exposition of his views on the matter was set forth in "La longue durée," the first systematic article he published in the *Annales,* after he had assumed direction of that journal and of the *Annales* school on the death of Lucien Febvre.[37] In some measure the program was successful. The language of *structure* and *conjoncture* has become the fashion among younger French historians of the *Annales* school—Baehrel, Deyon, Gascon, Le Roy

[36]Ibid., 2:520.

[37]"Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée," *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 725–53.

Ladurie. That language received its most colossal if not its most elegant application in the three volumes (following eight volumes of statistical tables) of Pierre and Huguette Chaunu's *Séville et l'Atlantique.*[38]

Braudel's conception of the *longue durée* is touched (if not tainted) by a measure of personalism. In his view *structures,* not only geographic but also technical, social, and administrative, act as obstacles. In this view there seems to be latent a touch of teleological thinking, a notion that history has an ordained path to follow, and that certain entities literally superhuman, *personnages,* block the way. The conception that history has a given path is an analytical instrument not free of philosophical flaw. It is, however, far less alarming in Braudel's generous ecumenical hands than it was when the direction of history was toward the thousand-year *Reich,* and the structures in the way were the inferior civilization of the Slavs and the perverse one of the Jews.

Yet even as his conceptions of *structures* and the *longue durée* won adherents, Braudel began occasionally to distance himself from them. As early as 1958 he wrote a little deprecatingly of two words "victorious *just at the moment,* structures and models,"[39] and in a footnote he quoted Febvre's devastating evaluation of the term: "And then '*structures.*' A fashionable word, I know; it even sprawls through the *Annales* occasionally, a little too much to suit my taste."[40]

Indeed, when it comes to the crunch Braudel is not satisfied with the image of the past that his metaphor of wee little waves on middle-size waves on great big waves yields. After all, the terms *courte, moyenne,* and *longue* conceal a series of lengths of the waves of *durée* that may, for all one knows, stretch in a continuum from the instantaneous to the multimillennially *trop longue.* At one point he recognizes this difficulty and, with characteristic hospitality embracing it, speaks of "three, ten, a hundred diverse *durées.*" Unfortunately in this massive bear hug the *dialectique des durées* gets shattered, irretrievably fragmented. History as a dialectic between two, even among three, *durées* is at any rate conceivable. But among a hundred? Babel and bedlam. This is not said merely to make a debating point.[41] We will, however, postpone further pursuit of the issue to consider two further *idées maîtresses* of Braudel—the idiocy of the *événementielle* and the pursuit of *histoire totale* (or *globale*) as a goal.

[38]See Braudel's review, *Annales E.S.C.* 18 (1963): 541–53.
[39]*Traité de sociologie* (n. 20 above), 1:90; italics mine.
[40]Ibid., n. 1. See also *Annales E.S.C.* 12 (1957): 180.
[41]See below, pp. 531–38.

About *histoire événementielle* Braudel writes with a passionate and at times unreasonable antipathy. The problem is to identify what it is that he so detests and to try sympathetically to understand his detestation. This is not easy, because in diatribes he drops clues in a random way that leads the reader astray.[42] What is *histoire événementielle?* Political history, says Braudel. But surely not the political history, for example, of Edmund Morgan's *The Stamp Act Crisis,* or C. Van Woodward's *Reunion and Reaction,* or Robert R. Palmer's *The Age of the Democratic Revolution?* Diplomatic history, says Braudel. But surely not the diplomatic history of Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy?* Administrative history. But surely not Geoffrey Elton's *The Tudor Revolution in Government?* Biography. But surely not Woodward's *Tom Watson,* or Mattingly's *Catherine of Aragon,* or H. R. Trevor-Roper's *Archbishop Laud?* No, this is obviously a false trail, even though Braudel has liberally left his footprints on it. Note, however, that all these counter-examples come from English and American writers, all from the years since 1940.

Fernand Braudel was marching to the beat of a different drummer, to the drumming of Marc Bloch and of Lucien Febvre in the birth years of the *Annales.* Their summons to attack, as we have seen, was directed against a particular kind of biography, a particular kind of political and diplomatic history—a kind, let it be said, not wholly unknown in the favored Anglo-American sector. And once one has known history of that kind, it is easy to believe that the purpose of its perpetrators is not so much to write history as to kill it. But whereas, in England and America, Maitland, Vinogradoff, Robinson, Beard, Becker, and Turner—historians who did not write that kind of history—enjoyed eminence and admiration before the mid-twenties, in 1929, at the age of fifty-one, Lucien Febvre, who had defended a superb *thèse* in 1911, was still in Strasbourg. Meantime in happy possession at the Sorbonne were historians who from Strasbourg, and perhaps on even closer inspection, looked like fuddy-duddies, men sunk up to their ears in the German tradition of historical pedantry and kept there by a misreading, derived from Comte, of the nature of scientific investigation. These historians, who could scarcely see beyond such subjects as "The Policy of Francis I toward Mantua in the Third Italian War," set the tone and pace for French historians in the half-century from 1875 to 1925, or so it seemed to Lucien Febvre.

This indeed accounts for the stridency of the attacks of the first

[42]For a small sample of Braudel's adverse remarks on *histoire événementielle* and on its practitioners the *historiens traditionalistes,* see *Annales E.S.C.* 2 (1947): 226; 13 (1958): 728–29; 15 (1960): 51, 511; 16 (1961): 727; 18 (1963): 119; *Traité de sociologie,* 1:86.

Annales on the rulers of the academy in France and on the sort of history they wrote. It accounts for Lucien Febvre. But after all Febvre won his battle and lived to enjoy the rout of his enemies. So how does it account for Braudel and his hostility to that *histoire événementielle,* which by a process of invidious selection turns out to be the very worst history written by the dullest Sorbonnistes of the first quarter of the twentieth century? Well, for one thing, Braudel is above all the heir of Lucien Febvre, attractively and utterly devoted and faithful to the man he succeeded. The enemies of Lucien Febvre are the enemies of Braudel—even when they have fallen from power and are mostly dead.

More than that, however. The *Sorbonnistes,* the proponents of *histoire événementielle,* were not only the not-so-*chers maîtres* of Febvre. They still held the strategic heights in Braudel's time as a student at the Sorbonne. In the early days of his researches he was ready to scale the Sorbonnic heights by producing one of those *thèses* which at that time so conveniently opened the way to the cushiest berths that French academia could offer to historians. It was to be the *Mediterranean Policy of Philip II,* a pure exercise in *histoire événementielle.* Since Febvre had taken as the subject of his thesis *Philip II and the Franche Comté,* it was natural for Braudel to write him about his own project. Febvre replied: "*Philip II and the Mediterranean,* a good subject. But why not *The Mediterranean and Philip II?* A subject far greater still? For between those protagonists, Philip and the inland sea, it is not an equal match." These "imprudent remarks" were to strengthen in Braudel "hesitations and scruples" the implications of which hitherto "he had not dared to draw." The power of his scruples and of Febvre's advice launched him "on a magnificent and exhausting campaign of documentation through all the archives of the Mediterranean world."[43] So besides all else, Febvre stood at the beginning of Braudel's disaffection with the career of *historien événementielliste,* on which he was preparing to launch himself, turning him in the direction of the vast work, not to appear for nearly two decades, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen.* Such is Febvre's account.

Enough? Enough to account for that occasionally myopic disaffection with *histoire événementielle* that marks both Braudel's *idées maîtresses* and his own historical work? Perhaps. Yet there may be more. At least I think there is more. It concerns the particular form that a common bitter experience of all Frenchmen took for a French army officer nearing middle age, Fernand Braudel. The experience was the *étrange défaite* that Marc Bloch wrote about with

[43]Febvre's review of Braudel's *La Méditerranée, Revue historique* 203 (1950): 217.

such insight, the collapse of France in the summer of 1940, and the consequences that followed from it.

In his systematic reflection on his view of history, "La longue durée,"[44] Braudel goes somewhat out of his way to take Jean Paul Sartre to task for "the intelligent and dangerous game" he had played in some recent reflections of his.[45] What was this game? It was the assertion that at the heart of history lie the act and the event, which gather into themselves the whole meaning of the life of the person who makes himself what he is by his way of participating in them. Moreover, their unfolding is a true mirror of the society in which they are played out. What does this—Sartre's involvement in the *événementielle* and Braudel's aversion—tell us? Something, perhaps, about the impact of the strange defeat of 1940 on two remarkable Frenchmen. Where was Jean Paul Sartre in the years that followed that defeat? He was teaching in the *Lycée Condorcet*. He was acting in the organized Resistance to the Nazi conquerors. He was living with daily risk of life and daily decision. And he was sitting in one café in Paris or another reflecting on the meaning of his experience. For him the daily string of events and his way of dealing with them made him the person he was and required him to remake himself each day in the face of them. The daily event was the test of his very being. So Sartre in Paris under the German occupation. And Braudel? Where was Fernand Braudel in those days and what was he doing? He was held in a German prison camp. He was the *recteur* of the camp, leader of and responsible for the French prisoners. There, helpless to do anything but live from day to day and help his fellow prisoners survive, there without a single document, a single note, a single book, "he achieved the incredible feat of writing from memory one after another, the successive chapters" of the first draft of *La Méditerranée*,[46] that colossal study, so enamored of the *longue durée*, so hostile to *temps court*, although devoting hundreds of grudging pages to it. Of his state of mind at the time, Braudel tells us something:

> In the course of a gloomy captivity I fought hard to escape from the chronicle of those difficult years. To reject the events and the time of events was to put one's self beyond them, in a shelter, to look at them from a little distance, to judge them better and *not too much to believe in them*. From *temps court* to pass to *temps* less *court* and *temps* very long . . .; then having arrived at this destination, to stop, to consider everything anew, and to reconstruct it, to see everything in reverse order: such an operation has something in it to tempt a historian.[47]

[44] *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 725–53.
[45] Ibid., p. 737.
[46] *Revue historique* 203 (1950): 217.
[47] *Annales E.S.C.* 13 (1958): 748–49; italics of English words mine.

For Fernand Braudel in a German prison camp, the *événementielle,* the short view, the immediate present was despair, a powerful enemy not to be faced head on, to be defeated only by ruse, to be put at a distance, to be escaped. For Fernand Braudel, not trapped like Sartre in a maelstrom of decision and action in Paris but trapped more helplessly in a prison camp, on an island in time where no action could matter much, for such a man, in such a place, at such a moment to reject the merely momentary, the very short view, the *événementielle*—may it not have meant more than a move in an intellectual game, may it not have been a necessary act of faith, the narrow path to salvation? It may have been.

When a historian takes a position sheltered from events, very far from them, his act of distancing leads him, at any rate led Braudel, to see vast panoramas of the past. Ultimately he is confronted with the problem of transforming a sweeping vision to truculently linear word-by-word prose. In such circumstances what is he to do and how is he to do it? On this matter Braudel had two *idées maîtresses,* and to the question he returned two answers—*histoire problème, histoire totale.* In the year of publication of *La Méditerranée,* in a review of a geographical study of Martinique, Braudel firmly stated the "problematic imperative." "The region is not the framework of research. The framework of research is the problem, selected with full independence and responsibility of mind, beyond all those plans, so comfortable and so tempting, that carry with them as an extra dividend, the warranty and blessing of the University."[48] If the geographer is to take the problem rather than the region as the unit of research, the historian is to take the problem rather than the event or string of events. *Histoire problème* provides the route of escape from *histoire événementielle.* Charles André Julien, author of *Les voyages de découvertes,* has, says Braudel, "the taste for that *histoire-problème* which goes far beyond events and men, history grasped within the framework of a living problem or a series of living problems, clearly posed, to which everything is thereafter subordinated—even the joy of describing or rediscovering real lives, the delights of restoring to life the great shadows of the great."[49] And fourteen years later, by then the unchallengeable oracle of historians in France, Braudel reiterated his warning of 1949: "I do not want young French historians to throw themselves futilely into enterprises analogous to those of the prestigious disciples of Vidal de la Blache, studying the various regions of the French mosaic one after another. Neither the *bailliage,* nor the

[48]Ibid., 8 (1949): 496.
[49]Ibid., 5 (1950): 453.

pays, nor the region provides the true bounds of research. But rather the problem."[50] "Lucien Febvre never ceased saying it," Braudel concludes. And indeed he did not. More than that: he did it. In articles: "An Ill-stated *Question.*" In books: *The* Problem *of Unbelief.* And without so frequently stating it, needing no incantations to keep him on the road he was predisposed to follow, so did Marc Bloch do it. Among historians of England, of course and supremely, Frederic William Maitland did it, lighting the dusty corridors of medieval English law as he passed through them with one lively question after another.

Histoire problème, then. Yes, but not entirely, not always. Fernand Braudel has another love—*histoire globale, histoire totale.* In *histoire globale* we must "remerge each observation, each measurement, into the totality of the field of social force."[51] "Faithful to the teaching of Lucien Febvre and Marcel Mauss, the historian will always want to seize the whole, the *totality* of the social."[52] It is in the interest of a totality that allows varied possibilities of slippage, uncertainties, explanations which are "daughters of the moment," that historians must part company with sociologists. It is not easy to be sure what Braudel means by *histoire totale.* It comes more frequently to the lips of younger historians. But the impulse is there, who can doubt it? Who can doubt it, when after reading the 653 packed pages of *Beauvais and the Beauvaisis,* Braudel remarks that its author, Pierre Goubert, might have done well to consider other areas of northern France as well?[53] When, after three fat volumes of *Séville et l'Atlantique,* he observes that the Chaunus had taken in only the Antilles, not the whole Atlantic, as he had taken in the whole Mediterranean[54]—and (he might have added) a good bit more? *Histoire totale*—but what are its bounds? And is "total history" the correct translation? Should it not rather be "endless history," "interminable history"?

Between these two *idées maîtresses,* these two conceptions of history, *problème* and *totale,* there lies not just the possibility of conflict but the reality, and with this conflict in another context, we will have to concern ourselves. That Braudel is himself aware of the conflict with its implication of mutually exclusive aspirations is not clear. In any event, among the many issues he has dealt with, it is not one. Faced with that issue, which would he choose? *Histoire pro-*

[50]Ibid., 18 (1963): 778.

[51]Ibid., 8 (1953): 359. At times the term *globale,* drawn from the sociology of Georges Gurvitch, makes Braudel a little uneasy (*Traité de sociologie,* 1:88, 74).

[52]*Traité de sociologie,* 1:94.

[53]*Annales E.S.C.* 17 (1962): 778.

[54]Ibid., p. 542.

blème? histoire totale? One can almost see an adult and a small boy. The adult asks, "What do you want?" Properly and promptly the small boy replies, "I would like a marshmallow cookie heavily coated with dark chocolate." A little doubtful, the adult asks again, "What do you really want?" This time the boy pauses. Then his eyes light up. "I really want—everything in the world!"

* * *

And now, having traversed the *conjonctures* of Braudel's *idées maîtresses,* this may be as good a place as any to turn to that pregnant event, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World,* that classic whose first utterance is, "I have passionately loved the Mediterranean."[55]

III. Evénement

Where does one begin to deal with an event 1,100 pages long? Perhaps, bowing to circumstance, with a *histoire événementielle,* a chronicle, superficial and perforce inexact, of its genesis drawn from the bits of evidence at hand. So. . . . Born in 1902, Fernand Braudel, a student of history at the Sorbonne, decided to write his doctoral thesis on the Mediterranean policy of Philip II, king of Spain (1556–98). In 1923 he went to teach in Algiers. At some point in his stay there,[56] having made good progress on his thesis, he wrote the eminent French historian Lucien Febvre about it. Following both the advice he received from Febvre and his own inclination, he radically reoriented his thesis topic and embarked on a further round of archival research. In 1937 he became a *directeur d'études* at the Ecole pratique des hautes études. By 1939 he had finished his research;[57] he had in mind the structure of his thesis. In 1940 he was taken prisoner by the Nazis. In the prison camp he wrote the first draft of his thesis. On his release from captivity, he prepared the final draft of his work, including the massive scholarly apparatus. In 1947 he successfully defended his thesis and was awarded his *doctorat d'état,* and in 1949 the thesis was published, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II.* The text is exactly 1,100 pages long, followed by a bibliography of twenty-eight pages detailing among

[55] *Méditerranée,* 1:13.

[56] The evidence at hand does not permit me to state the date.

[57] In one sense this is clearly so. Braudel certainly did no research during his imprisonment from 1940 to 1944 or 1945, and revision of his first draft including the footnoting must have carried him near to the date of his defense of his thesis. In another sense I am not so sure. Did Braudel finish his research, or did the Germans call an abrupt halt to it? Had it not been for the Germans would the flow of chapters have started when it did? One cannot be certain.

other matters intensive research in archives located in nineteen repositories in eleven cities in four countries.[58] The work is divided into three major parts. Part I, "La part du milieu," 304 pages, deals with mountains, plateaux, and plains; the seas of the Mediterranean and its shores and islands; the outreaches of the Mediterranean into Europe and into the encroaching deserts. In the first part, too, there is consideration of the physical unity of the Mediterranean—its climate—and of the human unity created by its sea and land routes, and by its towns. Part II (414 pages) bears the title, "Destins collectifs et mouvements d'ensemble." It first concerns itself with Mediterranean economies in the sixteenth century, especially the role of distances and population densities, precious metals and prices, commerce and transportation. Second, it deals with Mediterranean empires, civilizations, societies, and forms of warfare in the *époque de Philippe II*. Part III, "Les événements, la politique, et les hommes," 366 pages, is a detailed account of the struggles between the Spanish and the Turkish empires for mastery in the Mediterranean between 1551 and the death of Philip II in 1598. Roughly, then, the architecture of Braudel's book follows the scheme expressed in one of his *idées maîtresses:* Part I—*structures* and the *longue durée;* Part II—*conjonctures* and the *moyenne durée;* Part III—*événements* and the *courte durée*.[59]

In a review the year after the publication of *La Méditerranée,* Lucien Febvre described it as "this perfect historical work . . . . more than a professional masterpiece. A revolution in the way of conceiving history. An overthrow of our old practices. A 'historic mutation' of capital importance . . . a great progress, a salutary renewal. The dawn of a new time, I am sure of it."[60] Some fifteen years later, as we started by saying many pages back, some of Braudel's friends advised him not to revise the book, not to "modify a text that had become classic."[61] Does this mean that *La Méditerranée* is a flawless work? It certainly does not. To the examination of some of its flaws we shall devote the first part of our critique of Braudel's book.

We may start with an early review of *La Méditerranée.* The reviewer noted that on three occasions Braudel refers to the castilianization of Aragon during the sixteenth century. Each time reference is made to only one piece of evidence; each time it is the same piece, a book by an Aragonese nobleman written in Castilian. But,

[58]Five countries since the independence of Algeria.

[59]Just roughly, however; it is not clear whether *sociétés* and *civilisations* in Part II are *conjoncturelle* or *structurelle.*

[60]*Revue historique* 203 (1950): 215, 224.

[61]*Méditerranée,* 1:11.

asked the reviewer, "What language would Braudel expect an Aragonese nobleman to write, at any time?"[62] This multiple use of the same document to prove a point that it did not actually prove alerts the critical reader to the possibility that Braudel is not a meticulous weigher and deployer of evidence and documentation. Thus alerted, one finds other clues that the case of the Aragonese nobleman does not stand alone. For a point on English social history under Elizabeth I, Braudel relies on Lytton-Strachey, perhaps not the most reliable authority on such matters.[63] For "the tradition" that "the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the unfortunate hero of the Armada, founded the Cabaret of the Seven Devils in Madrid," he refers us to Victor Hugo's *William Shakespeare,*[64] and we begin to wonder about the evidential value of the tradition.

A man "as well-informed as the Duke of Feria" reports that in 1595 "Naples, Sicily and Milan flourish as never before under their present government." For Braudel this is evidence of the prosperity of those places. The purpose of the report, it turns out, is to persuade Philip that the best he can do for England is to bring it under that same government, that is, his own.[65] In that context how highly ought we to value the well-informed duke's observation? It is my question, not Braudel's. Again, so great a city was Constantinople, that "in March 1581 eight ships loaded with grain provisioned it for a single day only."[66] Who says so? Salazar.[67] Who is he? Presumably Cristobal Salazar, the Spanish ambassador to Venice.[68] Writing from Venice on March 5, 1581, how does he know how many grain boats arrived in Constantinople in March? And how much grain is eight boatloads? Some Mediterranean ships carried 1,000 or even 2,000 tons. Braudel estimates the mean tonnage of Mediterranean shipping at seventy-five tons, and there were many craft that could handle no more than fifty tons, some even less.[69] At the unbelievable maximum eight shiploads means bread in Constantinople beyond a glutton's dream; at the minimum it means mass starvation (except, of course, that the city had sources of grain supply beyond the Nile valley). Constantinople was indeed a great city, a metropolis, which is the point Braudel intended to document. It is just that Salazar's letter does not document it.

[62] *American Historical Review* 55 (1949–50): 350.
[63] *Méditerranée,* 2:72 and n. 3.
[64] Ibid., p. 57 and n. 8.
[65] Ibid., 1:449–50.
[66] Ibid., p. 320.
[67] Ibid., n. 8.
[68] Ibid., p. 507. He fits the specification better than two other Salazars in the index.
[69] Ibid., p. 272.

When nature fails to bear the particular witness Braudel wants it to bear, it receives the same flexible treatment that more formal documents occasionally get. The mountains, for example, are places of "a partial and incomplete form of civilization." What of the Alps? Of course, not them. "The Alps are after all the Alps, an exceptional range of mountains." The Apennines then? No mention of them, perhaps out of deference to the late (in sixteenth-century terms) Duke of Urbino. The Pyrenees? Yes and no. But Aures, the Rif and Kabylias—there are real mountains.[70] In sum, on the face of the evidence, mountains that house incomplete forms of civilization house them, and mountains that don't, don't.

Socio-economic generalizations are as pliable as socio-geographical ones, as little subordinate to rigorous demonstration. "Was it a coincidence that Genoa . . . ? Was Barcelona's misfortune . . . not a consequence of . . . ? . . . By stretching the argument to its limit might it not be possible to say . . .? . . . Is it possible to go even further and say. . .?" All these interrogative hypotheticals are in pursuit of a cyclical theory of urban regression from trade to industry to banking, with banking surviving and impelling the decline of the first two.[71] Readers may entertain themselves by thinking up instances to which the theory does not apply.

We have already seen one instance of Braudel's casual way with figures. Here is another. Speaking of the effects of flooding in Venice, he tells of a disaster in 1443 in which the loss was said to be *"quasi mezzo million di ducati"* and of another "identical catastrophe" in 1600 *"con dano di un million d'oro* . . . which is also evidence that prices had risen in the meantime."[72] Of course prices *had* risen in the meantime, but the diluvial misadventures of Venice are hardly to the point. Even in our age, more attuned to statistical precision, we tend to discount quick estimates of damage from material disasters; and really is there any conceivable way to know that two such disasters a century and a half apart, the more recent almost four centuries back, were identical?

Actually such a light-hearted attitude toward statistics is not Braudel's customary one. Yet he does not treat them the way Anglo-American economic historians do, or the way his associates Goubert, Le Roy Ladurie, and Meuvret do. The latter deal with number the way a jealous husband treats a wife on whom he is wholly dependent, ever scrutinizing her behavior with an anxious eye. Brau-

[70]Ibid., pp. 29–30.
[71]Ibid., pp. 295–96.
[72]Ibid., p. 213.

del treats number as if it were a loose but charming mistress. He only half believes his statistics, but he is enchanted with them, and loves to play with them, so he refrains from scrutinizing too closely what they are up to. Thus the calculation of the annual havoc wrought by corsairs in the Mediterranean. The only figures are for Venice, 250–300 ships lost to corsairs from 1592 to 1609. Given that Venice had one-tenth of the shipping in the Mediterranean, 2,500–3,000 ships were lost during the eighteen-year period, 138–66 a year, a modest number. Only, however, "if one accepts for a moment, *without believing it too seriously,* that the trade of Venice was a tenth of that of the sea. . . . *Let us not put too much faith in the reasonableness of the uncertain figures.*"[73] Indeed not!

A richer example of Braudel's way with number is offered by his effort to discover the volume of commercial transactions in the Mediterranean. "Let us attempt our estimate," he begins.[74] The *alcabala* in Castile was a 10 percent transaction tax. In 1598 it raised 1 billion maravedis. Therefore, there was a volume of transaction in Castile in 1598 of 10 billion maravedis, or 1,500 maravedis (4 ducats) per capita. As for foreign trade, 363 million maravedis of import duties figured at one-tenth ad valorem gives 3,630 million as the value of imports. Double it to take in exports 7,260 million. Add 700 million for precious metals brought in, and we have a total port and border transaction of about 8 billion, a total transaction of 18 billion for Castile, nine ducats per inhabitant—a ratio of one to three between imports and internal trade.

What of France? During 1551–56, 36 million livres of importations. At two livres, six sols per écu, that equals 15.7 million écus. Double for exports—31.4 million. Apply to France the one-to-three ratio of Castile between imports and internal trade, and France's internal trade comes to 47.1 million écus; total transactions to 78.5 million. Sixteen million Frenchmen and therefore a total transaction average of five écus (or 5.6 ducats) per head. Round the numbers and extend the French rate to the whole Mediterranean population estimated at 60 million, and the volume of mercantile transactions for the area comes to "300 *million d'or.*"[75] So there it is!

What are we to make of it? A few questions. How do we judge the worth of the statistical base, the amounts given for the *alcabala,* the Spanish import duties, and the value of French imports? We look to the footnotes for guidance. For the French figure, reference to an

[73] Ibid., 2:209; italics mine
[74] Ibid., 1:419.
[75] Ibid., pp. 419–20.

article in the *Revue de géographie* of 1894, not a vintage year for statistical scrupulosity. For the Spanish figures, no references at all in the footnotes. One becomes a little uneasy. Then what about the assumptions? To compute the internal trade of Castile, 1,500 maravedis per capita in 1598, a population of six and two-thirds million in 1598 must have been assumed. But in calculating total trade per capita, "Castile 5 million inhabitants"—a 25 percent slice off the population, a veritable statistical Black Death. The frightful mortality may account for another curious statistical anomaly: although the ratio of gross internal to gross external trade is five to four, the rate of per capita internal to per capita external trade is four to five, a very unusual thing actually to happen. What of the one-to-three ratio of imports to internal trade boldly carried over from Castile to France? Somehow it is not perfectly persuasive. It is built into the same set of calculations that give a four-to-five (or five-to-four) ratio of foreign to domestic trade. How credible is the one-to-three ratio? At the ports there is one transaction only, either import or export. But what about internal trade? How many transactions to get the wheat on the stalk to the townsman's or the herdsman's table as bread? How many to get the wool off the sheep's back onto the townsman's or peasant's or herdsman's back as clothing? The one-to-three ratio one way or another is incredible. Either the Castilians were evading the *alcabala* wholesale by doing an inordinate amount of trading by barter, or in a great many cash transactions they were just not giving the king's government its cut. To transfer a ratio, implausible in the first place, derived from the *alcabala* in Castile, to France where there was no *alcabala* is not statistical analysis; it is legerdemain. As for the assumption that the volume of trade in France can be extrapolated to the whole Mediterranean basin, its boldness is exceeded only by its improbability. So we really do not believe Braudel's estimate of the volume of trade in the Mediterranean. We are in good company; neither does Braudel. The fiscal documents of Castile: "I need hardly indicate their shortcomings." The figure for the *alcabala,* "alas, also includes the *tercia,*" another tax. The relation between import duties and value of imports, "*arbitrarily* on the basis of 1 to 10." The population of France accepted as 16,000,000 by all historians "but without proof." As to the 300 *millions d'or* for the trade of the whole Mediterranean area: "This figure is surely not firm." Even from the outset he did not believe there would be a solid outcome. "The results will certainly be false but the operation will be instructive." A dark view of the practices of historians, owing its color to past experience, leads one to foresee generations of scholars entering into in-

vestigations of the sixteenth-century economy with the Mediterranean's 300 millions of Braudelian gold taken at face value, the way chroniclers' figures on the size of medieval armies used to be.

Braudel is candid and specific about his disaffection to history that concerns itself with people as persons. Such persons are *individus;* they belong to the ephemeral realm of the *événementielle;* and they have little impact on history in the *longue durée* or even in the *moyenne durée*. The *longue durée,* however, he populates with non-people persons—geographical entities, features of the terrain. Thus in the Mediterranean peninsulas "are key actors . . . have played leading roles. . . . They are almost persons . . . who may or may not be conscious of themselves."[76] Towns are vested with intentions, Constantinople, for example, with "the determination to impose settlement, organization and planning" on the Ottomans. It "triumphed over and betrayed" them, luring them into the wrong wars with the wrong goals.[77]

The protagonist of this somewhat peculiarly cast historical drama, of course, is the Mediterranean itself, or rather herself. She has designs or purposes of her own, which she sometimes succeeds in fulfilling. She "contributed . . . to preventing the unity of Europe, which she attracted toward her shores and then divided to her own advantage."[78] And in the sixteenth century through Genoa she "long allocated the world's wealth."[79]

Times, too, get personalized. "The sixteenth century had neither the courage nor the strength" to eradicate the ancient evils of the great cities, and "Modern Times [*la Modernité*] suddenly projected the territorial state to the center of the stage."[80]

One geographical phenomenon, the big city, is subjected to a veritable trial with Braudel serving as historical *juge d'instruction.* First the evils for which big cities were responsible in the sixteenth century are laid out. They were "parasites"; they "gave virtually nothing" and consumed a great deal. Then, on the other hand, "one cannot launch inconsiderately into a prolonged indictment of huge cities. . . . There

[76]Ibid., p. 48.

[77]Ibid., pp. 171–72.

[78]Ibid., p. 460.

[79]Ibid. "She" really did not, even metaphorically. On the contrary, by working out the means of transfer payments from Spain via Italy to the Netherlands, the Genoese bankers at the behest of Philip II drained money out of the Mediterranean to fuel the wars of the Netherlands (ibid., 1:435). Philip allocated the money; the Genoese executed his orders. Braudel's implicit identification of wealth with silver and gold is odd.

[80]Ibid., 1:300.

are perfectly good reasons for them," and "a plea of not guilty" might be entered "on behalf of these admirable political and intellectual instruments."[81] It is not at all certain that our historical perceptions are sharpened by the depersonalization of men or by the personification of the features of human geography.

So far, I have criticized defects in details, significant only because their repetition gives them a patterned quality which mirrors certain consistent traits of Braudel as a historian. Two other difficulties of unequal importance are of serious concern. The first, and less important, makes it hard to follow intelligently the large section of the *Méditerranée* devoted to economic activities. Braudel refers to a vast number of weights, of measures of volume, and of moneys, both coined moneys and moneys of account from all over the Mediterranean. For example, a few minutes' search turned up the following names for moneys: ducats, écus d'or, sequins, lire, soldi, zeanars, dobles, soltaninis, livres, sous, écus d'argent, doblones, escudos de oro, reales, aspri, tourrones, escus pistolet, courrones, tallieri, quattrini, bajocci, kronenthäler, marchetti, pesos, reali ad 8, 6, and 4, maravedis, pfennigs, drachmas, reales, déniers, thalers, maidin. Occasionally, either by an explicit statement or by providing means for an inference, Braudel enables the reader to make an equation for two different moneys, for example 375 maravedis equal one ducat. Nowhere in *La Méditerranée,* however, is there a table of coins and moneys of account. Or of weights and measures. And for such helping guides in the morass of moneys, weights, and measures, a reader, at least this reader, feels a pressing need.

The second difficulty is more serious, since it speaks to a nearly blind spot in Braudel's historical vision. Perhaps in self-defense in dealing with *structures,* he attends almost entirely to material structures—peninsulas, islands, mountains, plateaus and plains, seas and oceans, climate and seasons; routes, shipping, and towns. Routines imbedded in custom and law receive less attention or none. The Mediterranean world is the world of grain, the olive tree, the vine, and the sheep. As to the shepherds we hear only of those involved in the migration from high summer pasture to low winter pasture. Of the daily, scarcely changing life and practices of the vineyard, the olive grove, and the wheat field we hear too little. Nor do we learn much about how small communities—guilds, villages and towns, or large ones—provinces, principalities, city states, realms, or empires—actually ordered their affairs or of what held them together in durable structures. In the age of Philip II two great empires, that of

[81] Ibid., pp. 316–21.

the king of Spain and that of the Ottoman sultan, divided and fought over the Mediterranean. Of the bonds which held each of those unwieldy conglomerates together, more or less, we catch only fleeting glimpses. Of the religious structures, Christianity and Islam, that at once held each together and divided it,[82] we see nothing from the inside. They are recurrent names, but what gave them life—their interlaced institutions, practices, and beliefs—is nowhere to be found.

So *La Méditerranée* has flaws, is in some ways a flawed book. But here we need to pause. To judge a great work like *La Méditerranée* by its flaws is like judging an economy during a boom solely on the record of concurrent proceedings in bankruptcy. There is much more to the book than casual mistakes or even than systematic ones. Indeed all the remarks so far under the heading of *Evénement* might rightly be condemned as myopic. They are certainly the work of a historian more exclusively admiring than he need be or should be of tightly built historical works, works that in all their lineaments, articulation, and composition bear the marks of fine, delicate, and patient craftsmanship. His first instinct, and not a very ingratiating one, is to pry away at the places in a historical work that show haste or careless handiwork. It is the wrong instinct for approaching *La Méditerranée,* for to such an approach that book is bound to be vulnerable; indeed, its vulnerability to the above criticism is, I think, an inevitable concomitant of the two qualities in continuous tension with each other that make it indeed a classic.

The first of these great qualities is Braudel's vast appetite for extending the boundaries of his undertaking, the perimeter of his vision. We become aware of it when we ask what the book is about. The Mediterranean in the age of Philip II—that is, a bounded body of water between A.D. 1556 and 1598? Of course not. As to time, King Philip II begins being king in 1556 and stops in 1598—two events; but the Mediterranean, a structure of geohistory, does not begin and end like that; it goes back to man's settlement on its shores, and to the ways of life that such settlement mandated. And it goes forward to today, when some of those ways of life still survive. Other ways of Mediterranean life, born long before Philip, continue long after he was laid to rest. Philip was not the master of structural time, the *longue durée;* the creations of that time were silent constraints on all he did. Nor does the time of *moyenne durée,* of *conjoncture,* accommodate itself to the ephemeral span of his reign. The discernible rhythms of economies, societies, and civilizations lie to both sides of

[82]Divided the empire of Philip because of the Reformation; that of the Ottomans, because of the tension between ruling ex-Christian slaves and Moslem subjects.

him, before he began, after he ended—the whole sixteenth century at least. But not the sixteenth century of traditional historians, bewitched by the sign of the double zero. With respect to the cycles of the Mediterranean economy, according to Braudel there are two sixteenth centuries. One ran roughly from about 1450 to about 1550, an economic upswing in the Mediterranean followed by an economic downswing. Then a second sixteenth century from about 1550 to 1630 or 1650, a revival of the Mediterranean economy and then its final plunge and departure from stage center, thrust out by the Atlantic and the powers of the Atlantic rim of Europe.

And the space of the Mediterranean—is it the blue waters of the inland sea and the men who sailed them or lived on their shores? Of course, but far more than that. *La Méditerranée* starts in the mountains, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Apennines, the Dinaric Alps, the Caucasus, the mountains of Anatolia and Lebanon, the Atlas, the Spanish Cordilleras, the interior massifs of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica. Then it moves down from the mountains to the plateaus, to the hills, to the plains, and at last to the sea or the several seas of the Mediterranean basin. But Braudel does not stop there. There is a "Greater Mediterranean" to consider. The desert touches the inland sea, and by caravan routes Braudel takes us through the hot deserts to the Africa of the blacks, whence gold came to the Mediterranean; by caravan again through the cold deserts of Asia to China, whence came silk and fine fabrics and to which the Mediterranean sent gold and silver. By four "isthmuses," combined land and water routes, Braudel stretches the Mediterranean to Russia, Poland, Germany, France; and along those routes he takes us junketing to Moscow, Lublin, Lvov, Nuremburg, Augsburg, Ulm, Lyon, Paris, Rouen. So the terrestrial Mediterranean stretches out. Much more, the watery Mediterranean, through the strait of Gibraltar, first to Bruges, Antwerp, London, Hamburg, Danzig—the route of wool and wheat southward, cloth and alum and oriental goods northward. Then several more great bounds to the islands of the Atlantic, to Mexico and Lima, and at last by the way of Acapulco to Manila and to China. There by this vast extension of the Mediterranean of the seas westward, we meet ourselves coming east by caravan train across the Mediterranean of the deserts.

Let us not deceive ourselves. No doubt there is a reason or a rationale for some of these flights through time and space, and more or less plausible excuses for others. But we fail fully to understand the historian behind *La Méditerranée* if we pause to quibble over this journey or that one. They may be a piece of Braudel's historical

design; they are surely a piece of something more insistant and consistent than any design—his temperament, his feel for history. The countervailing manifestation of that feel is Braudel's inexhaustible delight in piling up concrete detail—detail for detail's sake.

A few examples. The Mediterranean was a sea of small ships: "barques, *saëtes, laudi, luiti,* tartans, frigates, *polaccas.*"[83] Among writers who described caravans there is not only Tavernier, there are also "Gobineau, G. Schweinfurth, René Caillé, Brugnon and Flachat."[84] The transhumance routes that the Mediterranean sheep and their shepherds followed had different names in different places: "*cañadas* in Castile, *camis ramadas* in the Eastern Pyrenees, *drayes* or *drailles* in Languedoc, *carraires* in Provence, *traturi* in Italy, *trazzere* in Sicily, *drumul oilor* in Rumania."[85] The hungry camel driver lives on "famine foods." "The Taureg of the Air use . . . the seeds of the *drinn,* the *mrokba,* wild *fonio, cram-cram, tawit,* the rhizomes and young shoots of the *berdi.* Their neighbors the Tibu . . . get their bread from the fruit of the *dûm.*"[86] The commerce between Spain and North Africa brought to the African shore "textiles—broadcloths, silks, velours, taffetas, rough village cloths—cochineal, salt, perfumes, gum, coral, saffron, tens of thousands of caps," and brought back "sugar, wax, tallow, cowhides and goat skins, even gold."[87] It is a tragedy that the Spanish did not pursue their enterprise in North Africa "after the occupation of Melilla in 1497, of Mers-el-Kebir in 1505, of the Peñon de Velez in 1508, of Oran in 1509, of Mastaganem, Tlemcen, Ténès and the Peñon of Algiers in 1510."[88] The Tyrrhean almost lived off its own resources: "grain from Sicily . . . from Provence . . .; salt . . . from Trapiani; cheese from Sardinia; wine . . . from Naples; salt meat from Corsica; silk from Corsica or Calabria; fruit, almonds, walnuts as well as barrels of anchovies and tuna from Provence; iron from the isle of Elba; . . . capital from Florence or Genoa."[89] And then there is the mind-boggling six-page census of the shipping of Atlantic powers in the Mediterranean before 1550—the shipping of the Basques, the Biscayans, and the Galicians; the Portuguese; the Normans and the Bretons; the Dutch and the English—compiled out of the archives of Mantua, Simancas, Venice, Paris, Florence, and Ragusa; out of the

[83] *Méditerranée,* 1:112.
[84] Ibid., p. 165.
[85] Ibid., p. 86.
[86] Ibid., p. 159.
[87] Ibid., 2:186.
[88] Ibid., 1:108.
[89] Ibid., p. 112.

contemporary writings of Sanudo, Forquevaux, Hakluyt, and Argenté; out of the books edited by Gosselin and Charrière; out of the modern studies of Heers, Almeida d'Eça, Gioffrée, Billioud, Mollat, Collier, Delumeau, Douais, Doëhaerd, Carus-Wilson, Amman, Capmany, Cunningham, Williamson, Wood, Lubimenko.

And Alpharbar's ship was laden with "gold, silver, rings, jewels, spices, drugs and aromatic perfumes, parrots, pelicans, civet cats, monkeys, black-spotted weasels, porcupines. . . ."

This last list is not from *La Méditerranée* by Fernand Braudel; it is from *Gargantua* by François Rabelais. It suggests that when we first started to think about *La Méditerranée,* we began with the wrong image of a classic in our mind. The image of Racine, perhaps, with his "classical" unities of time, place, and persons, tightly interlocked by an event that forced each person into momentary yet absolute self-revelation, a "moment of truth." Racine, the "classical" dramatist of the "classical" seventeenth century. Nothing of this in Rabelais, the man of the sixteenth century, or in Braudel, the historian of a sixteenth century which, in his spreading Rabelaisian embrace in *La Méditerranée,* becomes two, many centuries—a different kind of classic. Braudel's way with the past is Gargantuan; he has an enormous delight in it, its largest lineaments and its most intimate details, an irrepressible appetite for going everywhere, seeing everything, and telling all about it. Thus he pursues the flow of gold from the Sudan into the Mahgreb, which was open to all the Mediterranean traders of Europe. Eleven ports of the Mahgreb to which the Europeans came—Ceuta, Tangiers, Fez, Oran, Tlemcen, Bougie, Constantine, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, Hone. The nine kinds of Europeans who came—Aragonese, Castilians, Catalans, Marseillais, Provençals, Ragusans, Sicilians, Venetians. And the Genoese. About them a lovely useless piece of information. At Tunis in 1573, "the Spanish found not the [Genoese] quarter, but its old cisterns."[90] Another flow, the irresistable flow of the mountain people of the Mediterranean into its plains—Corsicans, Albanians, Bergamasques, Armenians. Armenians? A bit off the Mediterranean really; still, they did go to the Mediterranean, to Constantinople and "to Tiflis, Odessa, Paris, the Americas."[91] That very great "Greater Mediterranean"!

Braudel is not padding; no need to pad a book of 1,100 pages; it is just that he cannot resist all the lovely irrelevant or quasi-relevant details that his researches brought into his net. Many, many had to be discarded, but not all. For several pages he sets out that solemn and

[90]Ibid., p. 425.
[91]Ibid., p. 45.

methodical catalog mentioned before of every recorded voyage that northern sailors made into the Mediterranean in the early sixteenth century. Finally he comes to the last account of such a voyage in Hakluyt, the voyage of the *Aucher* in 1551. And for a page he sails us merrily around the sea with its commander, Captain Bodenham, and tells us that aboard the *Aucher* was "Richard Chancellor, who ten years later, in 1553, was to reach the mouth of the Duna in northern Russia."[92]

Pursuing one of his favorite topics, "the route," the paths that men and news and goods moved on, Braudel deals with sea routes and roads on land, and comes to the navigable rivers, to the Adige, the Po, the Adda, the Oglio, the Mincio, the Guadalquivir, the Nile, the Ebro, the Arno, and last to the Tiber, "the home of curious river boats with lateral rudder and two raised ends that served as steps for disembarking on the steep banks of the river."[93] After he dropped this charming bit of random information, perhaps an awareness of one of his own traits lodged in Braudel's subconscious. At any rate a few pages later he writes appreciatively of Rabelais, "who took an interest in everything."[94]

As with Rabelais, Braudel's bursts of arcane information rise off the solid rock of an erudition enormous in scope. He examines "The Weaknesses of the Maritime Sectors" of the Mediterranean. Part of those weaknesses was the result of shortages of the various kinds of wood for ships. Braudel tells us of the timber for the Ragusan boats, of the kinds of wood the Ragusans used and where it came from, of the kinds the Turks used, of the best wood for oars and where it came from, of the buyers of ship timber, Ragusa, Spain, Genoa, Barcelona, and the sellers, Tuscany, Naples, the Catalan Pyrenees, the Calabria with its forests of "Nerticaro, Ursomarso, Altomonte, Sandonato, Policastrello." For this one-paragraph survey Braudel draws on one modern work and one of the early seventeenth century, on the printed correspondence of a French ambassador and on the archives of Ragusa, Florence, Simancas, and Naples.[95]

His restless piercing eye sees beyond simple geographical boundaries, even those of his own making, and where his eye goes his words follow. He considers the role of the Mediterranean islands as transmitters of material culture. Sugar, for example, passes from mainland Egypt to island Cyprus and thence to island Sicily and

[92]Ibid., pp. 555–56.
[93]Ibid., p. 258.
[94]Ibid., p. 261.
[95]Ibid., p. 130.

thence, brushing aside the straits of Gibraltar, to Madeira, the Azores, the Cape Verde islands, the Canaries, at last to the islands of the Caribbean.[96] For, after all, what are islands? Land surrounded by water? But why just water? Are there not "islands that the sea does not surround"? Greece closed off by "terrestrial walls"; Naples likewise "cut off to the north by the thickness of the mountains that make its boundary with Rome"; Lombardy "a continental island between the Alps and the Apennines, between rustic Piedmont and half Byzantine Venice"; and the Maghreb and Syria, made islands by their deserts. "Scarcely exaggerating, one may speak of a whole series of peripheral islands, Portugal, Andalusia, Valencia, Catalonia, linked by Castile to the Iberian mass."[97] As Braudel puts it, *forçons les termes,* make rigid words give a little, and all sorts of interesting things can happen, all sorts of new insight and possibilities can open up.[98] As with Humpty-Dumpty so with Braudel, words are made to mean what he wants them to.

For Braudel has the Rabelaisian spirit in his love not only of stray particulars but of all sorts of general notions. He seizes on any idea that comes his way—and an abundance, a plethora, comes his way—looks at it a while, applies his enormous knowledge to it, and makes something of it. The century of the Jews. The diaspora of the mountain dwellers. The perils of the plains from the mountaineers above and the malarial marshes nearby. The true human distances of the Mediterranean in the sixteenth century—the time it took men and goods to get from point to point. The impact on the Mediterranean of the Portuguese diversion of the gold of black Africa to Atlantic enterprises. The role of the Genoese as world bankers. The gross industrial output of the Mediterranean region. The decline of the Spanish bourgeoisie. The baroque as a Mediterranean incursion into the north of Europe. . . . These are a mere handful of the colossal pile of ideas that Braudel examines in *La Méditerranée* with as much patience as his mind can muster. Then, restless, only rarely willing to push to the bottom of the matter in hand, he passes on to another idea, just as captivating for a while.

Yet Braudel's flashes of insight are not only brilliantly conceived but often beautifully documented: the frustrating snail's pace of communication in the sixteenth century, the mail that came too late, too slow, or not at all, he illustrates by letters from the empress of the Holy Roman Empire to Philip II, from Calvin to del Vico, from

[96]Ibid., p. 141.
[97]Ibid., p. 146.
[98]Ibid., 2:152.

Antonio de Guevara to a friend, from Don Luis de Requesens at Antwerp to Philip's ambassador in Paris.[99] Braudel summarizes the interplay of force that made some times and distances not intervals precisely measured but a grab bag of uncertainties. "At sea a favorable wind and a spell of fine weather might make the difference between taking six months for a voyage or completing it in a week or two. . . . On land . . . a war, a state of alert, roads flooded by heavy rain, or passes blocked by a snow fall" could have a like effect. "Distances were not invariable, fixed once and for all, and one could never be sure in advance before setting out or making decisions, what timetable fate would impose."[100] Big features of human geography and little have their special meanings: the big cities as consumers of wealth and creators of civilization, the many small towns along the land routes as stopovers, man's concession to the hard "arithmetic of distances," the prosperity of the small ship as an index to the general prosperity of Mediterranean trade.

All this suggests another trait of Braudel and *La Méditerranée,* a trait that is also a rightful inheritance from the sixteenth century. It is a trait not suggested by the formal and formidable table of contents of the book with its neatly laid out three parts, each with its sections, subsections, and sub-subsections. Braudel is a *picaresque,* a wanderer with the whole Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II to roam in; more, with such extension in space and time as he chooses to give to that world. The parts and the sections of the book point him in a set of rough general directions, but they do not tell him just where to go, or how long he should linger at one place or another. He moves or stays as the spirit moves him. When here or there he is attracted to something off the track, a three-star something that in his internal "Michelin" *vaut le voyage,* he is ingenious enough to break out of his preset itinerary.

For readers, and I hope there will be many, who turn to the English translation of *La Méditerranée* out of curiosity and for pleasure, the picaresque Braudel is the one to imitate. Do not earnestly (as I did) start at the beginning, go to the end, then stop. Rather open at random, find the beginning of a sub-subsection and start there. If what you read does not interest or please you, close and open at random again. Only a most unlikely set of accidents or a most incurious mind will require you to repeat this procedure often. If the sub-subsection satisfies your curiosity, go on to another as far away or as near as you

[99]Ibid., 1:327.
[100]Ibid., p. 328.

wish. If it whets your curiosity, go back to the subsection in which the sub-subsection is set and read it through.

That way, the Rabelaisian picaresque way, to think about and read *La Méditerranée* is a way that Braudel's own spirit and habits do not discourage; but it is not the only way, and it does less than full justice to the book. It fails to do justice to powerful aggregated conceptions whose force can only be grasped through reading more sustained than the chance method described above permits. There are a number of such sustained inquiries—the investigation of banditry as a form of class warfare, the study of the takeover of financial operations in Europe by the Genoese, and, most interesting to me, the three case studies of *le refus,* the rejection of the civilization of their masters or conquerors by a minority or a conquered group. The instances that Braudel examines are the Bulgars, the Moriscos, and the Jews. In the Balkan peninsula the Bulgars were for centuries subject to Ottoman domination. Tillers of the soil in the Danube plain, they fed their Moslem masters. But they never became Islamized. They clung stubbornly to the language and to the religion that isolated them, and through the centuries remained Bulgar-speaking and Orthodox Christian, not Turkish- or Arabic-speaking, not Moslem. On the westmost European peninsula the Moriscos. The Moors had lost their last power center on the Iberian peninsula, Granada, to the Catholic kings in 1492. The peasant labor force on the great estates of Andalusia, Valencia, and Aragon were still Moslem and Arabic-speaking in the 1500s, centuries after they had been submerged in the successive waves of the Christian reconquest of Iberia. The policy of the early rulers of united Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella and the first two Hapsburgs, was that of forced conversion to Christianity of both Moslems and Jews. The Moors became Moriscos; Jews, Marranos; Christians, by decree and forced baptism, "new Christians." Their Christian rulers dispersed the Moriscos throughout Spain. In dispersion they prospered, but they remained Arabs in custom and language and crypto-Moslems in religion. In the end Christian Spain "solved the problem" of Moorish Spain and its *refus,* its rejection of the civilization of the conquerors. It deported the Moriscos en masse to the Maghreb. The same refusal but different outcomes in Bulgaria and in Spain. Why? The Turks were thin on the ground in Bulgaria; the "final solution" did not provide a solution for them. They needed the field labor of the conquered. It was otherwise in Spain. In the demographic upsurge of Europe in the sixteenth century the population of Christian Spain grew. There were quite enough "old Chris-

tians" to take the place, or at any rate the land, of the new crypto-Moslem Christians.

Finally the Jews, the eternal and ubiquitous refusers, thrust from one place, then putting down roots, not too deep, in another place. A people for whom diaspora was a way of life. A people who survived by a habit of adaptability that was never total. A people who had learned by long experience to find a resting place on the narrow shelf of a rocky precipice, and, dislodged, to seize a handhold and explore until they found another. They paid their way by providing each stopping place with the skills that they quickly acquired, whatever skills were in short supply in their current lodging.

It is in his studies of such phenomena as movements of men, money, and goods, banditry, the corsair enterprise, *le refus,* that Braudel at once dazzles and puts to shame historians like me. Underlying such studies are archival researches of incredible scope, a mastery of printed sources as varied as it is vast, and acquaintance with secondary works the mere setting down of which takes up most of thirty-two pages. Not only did Braudel read much; he also found in that reading the evidence for connections, accessible only to a man of panoramic vision. *La Méditerranée* is a miracle of historical scholarship that shames both my narrow vision and my narrow learning.[101]

The sort of insight that went into the perception and investigation of the *refus* accounts in part, I think, for the powerful impact that the event, the publication of *La Méditerranée,* had on the structure of French historical studies. The book is a vast conglomerate of rough-hewn blocks of coherent historical substance, an implicit program, not starkly set forth as somebody's bright idea but imbedded in masses of solid though incomplete historical work. In one book, although a very big one, Braudel provided French historians with both a vision of what could be done and an apparently endless vista of what was yet to do, a schedule of tasks that challenged the imagination of historians and commanded their labors. The massive list of publications sponsored by the VI^{e} Section does not, of course, derive directly from *La Méditerranée.* Nevertheless, the rubrics under which the books appear—*Affaires et gens d'affaires, Archéologie et civilisation, Démographie et sociétés, Les hommes et la terre, Monnaie-prix-conjoncture, Ports-routes-trafics, Civilisations et so-*

[101]The uses of Braudel's enormous store of information are also evident in the rich detail of *La Méditerranée.* He uses it to give one a sense of the expense of the rapid dispatch of news by indicating that the cost of dispatching a courier from Chartres to Toledo and back was more than the annual salary of a professor at Padua or Salamanca (*Méditerranée,* 1:336–38).

ciétés—reflect the subjects on which Braudel concentrated his attention and the attention of others in and through *La Méditerranée*. And some of the matters that he pointed to as demanding attention—the history of epidemics, the history of climate, the history of population changes—have now received that attention in part because he secured support for those who gave it. Because in *La Méditerranée* he was always ready to ask big questions about urbanism, labor mobility, population pressure, price movements, economic cycles, gross production, volume of transaction, a generation of French historians have devoted meticulous attention to studies of those matters in depth and in detail, with a documentation and methods neither of which were available to Braudel in the late forties when *La Méditerranée* was brought to birth. In one aspect—perhaps its most important aspect—we may see in Braudel's masterpiece a seminal work in the true sense of that much-abused term. It is the seed from which, under his own laborious fostering and nurture, grew the tree, rich in fruit, which is the *Annales* school today, not only in France but wherever history as a *science humaine* flourishes.

We have now considered *La Méditerranée* from two points of view. First as a masterpiece of picaresque Rabelaisian history, a volume to delight the reader-amateur of history in the best sense of the word, who will receive abundant rewards in wandering through its pages, following his own whim. Second, as the seminal work of the *Annalistes* in the past two decades, still a rich storehouse of inchoate ideas and shrewd insights for the most productive and lively school of historians practicing their art today. Braudel is now well aware of the powerful impact of *La Méditerranée*. As he says, "A new crop of specialized research . . . follow[ed] in the wake of my book. It began by following in my footsteps and has now completely overwhelmed me." There follows a list, that by no means exhausts his influence, of more than thirty scholars in the course of whose studies, "I have participated, often very closely."[102] Yet to consider *La Méditerranée* only from these two angles of vision still does not do justice to the work or to its author. Indeed, although I hope not, I fear that Braudel may find my first point of view in dealing with his work frivolous. As for the second, when Braudel defended his *thèse* twenty-five years ago, the siring of a whole generation of historians can hardly have been more than a gleam in the master's eye. However well, in retrospect, our previous characterizations of *La Méditerranée* fit the work itself, they do not speak to the intention or intentions of its author as a historian at the time he wrote the book.

[102]Ibid., pp. 12–13.

What, then, were Braudel's intentions in writing *La Méditerranée?* We look for enlightenment to the prefaces of the two editions—and having looked we are perplexed. Not that the prefaces are left without the customary statement of intention. On the contrary. The difficulty is that several intentions are stated and that they point in divergent directions. The first intention Braudel states is "to discover exactly what the historical character of the Mediterranean has been."[103] A problem, then—the *histoire problème* dear to the heart of Lucien Febvre. But, really? A problem must have manageable bounds—unbelief in the early sixteenth century, for example. But the historical character of a body of water and the surrounding lands that for four millennia have been sites and routes for a half dozen or more civilizations? What *is* the problem? Indeed the *problem* soon undergoes mitosis and becomes "the *problems* posed by the Mediterranean" which are "of exceptional richness."[104] So then which problems? A question put too late, since even before we have time to ask it Braudel turns our attention to "the grand movement of Mediterranean life."[105]

Not really *histoire problème* at all, *La Méditerranée.* Rather *histoire totale,* history that aspires to embrace the whole of human activity, bringing to bear upon it all the knowledge that the sciences of man can provide—an account of the whole life of the peoples of the Mediterranean in the latter part of the sixteenth century. A task beyond the resources of any historian, even one so magnificently equipped, so learned, and so intelligent as Fernand Braudel. It is indeed a task he commits himself to but abandons quickly enough. Under the heading "Collective Destinies" we find much on certain matters pertaining to "The Economies," on precious metals, moneys and prices, commerce and transport. But on agriculture and industry there are only a few pages. Yet agriculture *was* the life of at least four-fifths of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean world. Still, 255 pages on Mediterranean economies in the second half of the sixteenth century—a generous allotment. On civilizations, only sixty-eight pages; on societies, forty-six. Three durable civilizations in the Mediterranean region—Moslem, Christian, Jewish. But about Islam, Judaism, and Christianity only that their followers lived in the Mediterranean in obdurate mutual *refus.* Of what the religions *were,* of their *mentalités,* nothing. Of course, to ask this totality of Braudel or anyone is absurd, it is too much—except that Braudel asked it of himself.

[103] Ibid., p. 13.
[104] Ibid., p. 15.
[105] Ibid., p. 14.

At another level Braudel sees *La Méditerranée* as an attempt to solve another problem. This time it is an intelligible bounded problem. It is not, however, a problem of history, of the past, but of historiography, of writing about the past. It is "the basic problem . . . confronting every historical undertaking," how "to simultaneously convey both that conspicious history that holds our attention by its continual and dramatic changes—and that other submerged history, almost silent and always discreet, virtually unsuspected either by its observers or its participants, a history that is little touched by the obstinate erosion of time."[106] To this problem, as we have already seen, Braudel proposed the solution of a three-tiered history or, as I have described it above, of a history that treats historical waves of varying length: *structures—longue durée, conjoncture—moyenne durée, événement—courte durée.* The concepts—structure, conjuncture, event—thus are not just guidelines for historians, notions to be kept in mind as they go about their work. At least for Braudel in *La Méditerranée* they are the visible architectural units that pattern the entire vast edifice. Such is Braudel's plan for dealing with a problem, a question that all self-conscious historians are occasionally aware of, and that all historians who write history perforce answer even if they do not ask it. In *La Méditerranée* how well did Braudel's solution work?

Let us first listen to reviewers and others who have written about Braudel's book.

One of the richest intuitions of the author is that social change is not uniform. . . . Nevertheless he translates it into the traditional divisions of historical domains (political, economic . . .). . . . It is hard to understand this hierarchy of rhythms. . . . Because he did not make his notion of *structure* precise enough, the author too often offers a mosaic of analyses, the common direction of which escapes us.[107]

* * *

In Braudel's work the three major sections—dealing successively with geography, with society, and with "events"—never quite came together.[108]

* * *

This reviewer found the liaison of the political history with the elements of human geography somewhat unconvincing. The extent to which such elements influenced those human decisions which in turn gave direction to the events of that half-century remained obscure.[109]

* * *

[106]Ibid., p. 12.

[107]Claude Lefort, "Histoire et sociologie dans l'oeuvre de Fernand Braudel," *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 13 (1952): 123–24.

[108]H. Stuart Hughes, *The Obstructed Path* (New York, 1966), pp. 58–59.

[109]R. A. Newhall, review, *Journal of Modern History* 22 (1950): 365.

Braudel's emphasis on the importance of factors of *longue durée* has made the gap between structure and event almost unbridgeable. . . . As important and rich as Braudel's *La Méditerranée* . . . is . . . Braudel never fully succeeds in showing the relevance of the long-range developments for the events of the period of Philip II.[110]

* * *

There are fine pages that illuminate their subject; but they do so not because of [the] lines of demarcation so carefully laid out, but in spite of them. The parts of his "world" are all there, but they lie inert, unrelated, discrete.[111]

And finally a faithful *Annaliste* expresses his judgment in 1971. Of *La Méditerranée,* "the greatest book produced by the *Annales* school," Jacques Le Goff writes,

The political history is relegated to Part III, which far from being the culmination of the work is more like the bits and pieces left over . . . an atrophied appendix . . . the parson's nose.[112]

The point of quoting these fragments from appraisals of *La Méditerranée* is not that the appraisals themselves were unfavorable. Quite to the contrary, most of them were sympathetic, some enthusiastic. The point is that whatever his overall judgment of *La Méditerranée,* with varying precision each reviewer expresses similar misgivings about the success of the book in executing Braudel's explicit intentions. The plan of superimposing *durées,* one on the other, so that the whole picture of the whole Mediterranean world would become visible, does not always or often work. For whatever reason, the superposition of "transparencies" yields a final product that is in many places turbid and opaque, in others transparent enough, but for reasons having nothing to do with the overall design.

In this connection it is worth noting that the most remarkable and successful works of historians within the orbit of the *Annales* school have not been constructed in precise emulation of *La Méditerranée.* Baehrel's work on Basse-Provence, Deyon's on Amiens, Gascon's on Lyon, Goubert's on the Beauvaisis, Le Roy Ladurie's on Languedoc, Meyer's on the Breton nobility are splendid works of scholarship linked by affinity or specific inspiration to *La Méditerranée.* Each of them concerns a relatively small area, none of them engages in large-scale geographizing (which would, of course, be inappropriate to their subjects). All are concerned with structures and conjunctures,

[110]Felix Gilbert in *Daedalus* (Winter 1971), p. 97, n. 21.

[111]Bernard Bailyn, "Braudel's Geohistory—a Reconsideration," *Journal of Economic History* 11 (1951): 279.

[112]Jacques Le Goff in *Daedalus* (Winter 1971), p. 4.

but only one with a chronological account of events,[113] and all treat structure and conjuncture as useful conceptions rather than as primary units for the organization of their material.

That a work so massive and powerful as *La Méditerranée,* a work that one way or another has served as an inspiration to two generations of French scholars, has not inspired those scholars to direct imitation seems puzzling. The fact tends to reinforce the thrust of the assessments of *La Méditerranée* quoted before. The book falls short of its author's intention in one major respect; it does not solve the historiographical problem that it poses: how to deal with the perennial historiographic difficulty of linking the durable phenomena of history with those that involve rapid change.

There are several reasons for this lack of success. First, the tripartite division of *durées* may better be referred to the residual trinitarianism of a *mentalité* once Christian than to any inherent rational necessity. In the crunch Braudel himself recognizes that between the Platonic poles of total stability and instantaneous change there are *durées* of the most varied length—"ten, a hundred." Second, the three *durées* are somewhat arbitrarily attached to the specific subject matters—*longue* to the geographic, social, and cultural; *moyenne* to the economic and sometimes the social; *courte,* in fact if not in theory, to the political.[114] As Claude Lefort pointed out, however, such linkages are purely arbitrary. In the Mediterranean, one political institution, monarchy, had a *durée* of some five or six millennia; two geographic ones—the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, August 24, A.D. 79, and the earthquake at Lisbon, November 1, A.D. 1755—had short *durées,* indeed, a day or so, a few minutes. In fact, each of Braudel's taxonomic essences—the geographic, the cultural, etc.—have attached to them *longues, moyennes,* and *courtes durées.* But in the Mediterranean is monarchy really political? Is it not rather social in its origin, and almost to the end religious? The question reveals a chronic but convenient defect in our practice as historians. For our convenience we divide the domain of human experience into more or less manageable compartments—social, economic, political—and then fall into the habit of treating our classificatory devices as realities or essences, setting them against each other, even making assumptions about their relative importance. We forget that they derive their importance from

[113]Pierre Deyon, *Etude sur la société urbaine au 17e siècle: Amiens, capitale provinciale* (Paris, 1967), pp. 426–73.

[114]If the above linkages do not seem consistent with every linkage that Braudel makes, it is because Braudel's own linkages are not perfectly consistent. The above does justice to his practice if not to his theory.

the volume of particular matters we ourselves decide, often arbitrarily, to subsume under each rubric.

It cannot be justly said that as a consequence of Braudel's views on *durée,* the *événementielle* receives short shrift in *La Méditerranée.* The shrift is not all that short, 364 pages in the edition of 1949. Moreover, indirect evidence suggests that it may have worked the other way around, that the *événementielle* received its shrift before Braudel got around to writing about *structure* and *conjoncture* in the Mediterranean world. It is at least certain that Braudel had no second thoughts on the *événementielle* between 1949 and 1966 when the second edition of *La Méditerranée* was published. Although in that edition large chunks are added to and subtracted from the first two parts of the book, and modifications appear on many pages of "The Role of Environment" and "Collective Destinies and General Trends," the last section, "Events, Politics and Men," remains unaltered save for a few added footnotes that produce no corresponding change in the text.[115] This lack of revision does not indicate that Braudel was satisified with the third part of *La Méditerranée.* On the contrary, he was satiated, fed up with it. He very much hesitated to publish it at all in 1966.[116] If it were permissible to be as bold in reconstructing the history of the composition of twentieth-century texts as twentieth-century scholars are in doing the like for sixteenth-century texts, one might go further. Braudel refers to the third section as *franchement traditionelle.* Of all the parts of *La Méditerranée* it would for that very reason have been the most difficult to write in the German prison camp, whence chapter after chapter of *La Méditerranée* came forth. It depends like the rest of the book on a colossal mass of data, but it also depends, as the rest of the book does not, on the exact chronological sequence of that data; that is the very nature of traditional diplomatic and military history. Doing that sort of history without reference works or notes would be, I should think, practically impossible. Moreover, an examination of the third part shows scarcely any citations from works written between 1939 and 1949. All of this suggests that the third part might have been written before 1939, before Braudel's imprisonment brought to a decisive

[115]This statement is not based on a page-by-page comparison of the third sections of the two editions, for which time was lacking. However, all the subheadings and sub-subheadings in the edition of 1949 appear in that of 1966. The few added sub-subheadings in the latter edition are simply interjected into sub-subsections without any further alteration of the text. In six chance samplings (10 percent of the total text of the third part) only two additions to the footnotes appeared, accompanied by no corresponding alteration of the text.

[116]*Méditerranée,* 2:223.

climax his disengagement from and discontent with traditional history, that it may have been in the main the traditional *thèse* which he was preparing before, so fortunately for the development of French historical scholarship, his own discontents and Lucien Febvre led him astray.

Be that as it may, the third part of *La Méditerranée,* though an adequate and erudite sample of "the old learning," would have caused no stir in the world of historians. Its very nature disables it from performing the function that Braudel assigns it. One cannot bring the course of political events into effective relation with the more durable and patterned phenomena of history by tacking a tired Sorbonne *thèse* (intellectual vintage of 1925) onto a lively collection of *Annales enquêtes.* The evidence does not suggest that Braudel failed to solve the historiographic problem he envisaged; it suggests that he did not really even try.

Yet that problem is not insoluble. One solution lay within Braudel's reach, and in fact time and again he reached for it and caught it. He caught it, for example, when he asked, "Why did banditry flourish in the Mediterranean toward the end of the sixteenth century?" "What accounts for the considerable flood of Christian renegades into the service of the Turk and the Barbary States?" "Why did the Spanish ultimately expel the Moriscos?" One answer to the problem of bonding event, conjuncture, and structure is provided by *histoire problème.*

As a contrast with the fruitful sprawl of *La Méditerranée,* let us offer an example of *histoire problème,* a short essay by Edmund Morgan. In the third winter of the Jamestown colony in 1610, of the 600 men who had come there since its founding three years earlier only 60 were alive. In May 1611, Sir Thomas Dale finds the colonists "at their daily and usuall workes, bowling in the streets." Problem: "why did men spend their time bowling in the streets when their lives depended on work," in a situation which required that they "clear and plow and plant the crops that could have kept them alive? Were they lunatics . . .?" In a colony "teetering on the verge of extinction" why do even stern governors exact only four to six hours of labor? How are we to account "for this chronic unemployment or underemployment at Jamestown?" Partial answers were supplied at the time by contemporaries: too many gentlemen, unaccustomed to labor, among the settlers, too much hunger, too much disease. Another answer later: the rules of the Virginia company stifled private enterprise and individual initiative. There remains a problem unsolved: "What ideas and attitudes about work, carried from England would

have led the first English settlers to expect so little of themselves in a situation that demanded so much?" Morgan has posed the problem; now his quest for a solution.

First, English ideas about the New World, ideas that were a century in the making—a *mentalité,* a *structure,* a *modèle.* The Spanish model, the Spanish experience made easily available by Richard Hakluyt, with two components—an abundant land, a native population available to do the hard work. That was what 100 years of Spanish literature of colonization prepared the English settlers to expect in America. That was what they did not find on the sandy spit at the mouth of the James River or in its hinterland. Willy-nilly, to live they would have to work.

What notions about work did they bring with them from England early in the seventeenth century? Those ideas were formed during a century of rising population that outstripped both food supply and opportunities for full employment. By modern standards, in Tudor England "the population . . . was idle much of the time." To prevent total idleness, the government adopted policies of "conservation of employment," work "rationed so that every one could have a little," policies that "helped maintain social stability," but by the practice of spreading work thin "discouraged energetic labor and nurtured the workingman's low expectations of himself." Poorly rewarded in an England where the Price Revolution steadily widened the unfavorable gap between cost of living and wages, many an Englishman was ready to seek a better life in the New World, "but a life devoted to more and harder work than he had known at home might not have been his idea of a better life."

Settling a wilderness, too, had an English model—movement into the hill pastures of the north and the west. There herdsmen supplemented their earnings with cottage industry and a cottage garden and traded for grain. The Spanish found profit that way in the West Indies. A model disastrously congenial to the settlers of Jamestown, who would not dig or plant, disastrously ill-suited to their actual situation.

Another model for the Jamestown settlement—the military expedition, like that of Cortez, but not much. Rather, a standard sixteenth-century English expedition made up of misfits, thieves, and the idle retinues of its idle gentleman-officers. "Soldiers on campaign were not expected to grow their own food. On the other hand they were expected to go hungry often and to die like flies even if they never saw an enemy." A poor model for the requirements of colonization on the Virginia coast, a fair fit for what actually happened in Jamestown in the early days.

Finally, a conception of the Virginia enterprise as a small-scale model of England, with its specialized exclusive crafts, and craftsmen who did not readily turn their hands to whatever work needed to be done. "Jamestown had an oversupply of glassmakers and not enough carpenters or blacksmiths, an oversupply of gentlemen and not enough plowmen." And no jacks-of-all-trades.

The Virginians did find a profitable crop after a while, tobacco. And they found a solution to the labor problem, indentured servants brought over from England. A poor solution, however, since the new arrivals "brought with them the same haphazard habits of work as their masters." As soon as they were out of their indentures (those who survived them), "they struck out for themselves, . . . demanding rather than supplying labor."

At last came the solution of the *longue durée,* "a cheaper, more docile, more stable supply of labor." As the seventeenth century wore on, Virginia's position in the market for black slaves improved. As against tobacco prices, the price of sugar, the competitive consumer of blacks, fell. The supply of blacks increased. Mortality declined in Virginia, reducing the risk involved in the initial outlay. And so "the Virginians at last were able to acquire substitute natives for their colony and begin, in their own English way, to Hispanize Virginia."

Such is Edmund Morgan's solution of "The Labor Problem in Jamestown, 1607-18,"[117] and of the historiographic problem that perplexed Fernand Braudel.

What binds together the event—the bowling scarecrows of 1611; the conjunctures—the curves of population, wages, and prices in England, of sugar, tobacco, and slave prices in the Atlantic world; the structures—the established image of colonial settlement, the ingrained English patterns and habits of work and leisure, the "military mind" of the sixteenth century? What does it? The problem precisely defined at the outset: why were the settlers of Jamestown unready for hard work? And what of the adjacent social science disciplines? Economics, sociology, social psychology come in, just as much of them as helps solve the problem and no more. Just as many events, conjunctures, and structures, and just as much about them as helps solve the problem, and no more. And all this in sixteen pages of spare lean prose without a superfluous reference or a dispensible phrase.

It is elegant. Indeed, history-as-problem proceeds under the sign of elegance. It is the point in the constellation of its forms where history comes closest to mathematics. For elegance of demonstration is a mathematical conception and criterion; the elegant solution employs

[117] *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 595-611.

the minimum number of signs and symbols and proceeds to proof in the minimum number of steps. The best practitioners of history-as-problem—Edmund Morgan is among the best—are almost as economical in their solutions as good mathematicians are.

Such is the historiography of *histoire problème*. It is not the historiography of Fernand Braudel or of the *monde braudellien* of the VI[e] section. That world proceeds under the signs of a deluge of information, of exhaustive documentation, of a torrent of words, of abundance at the risk of surfeit. Its proudest products are Deyon's Amiens—606 pages, Goubert's Beauvaisis—653 pages, Baehrel's Basse Provence—842 pages, Gascon's Lyon—999 pages, Le Roy Ladurie's Languedoc—1,035 pages, and Braudel's Mediterranean—1,218 pages. And why not? History is a house of many mansions. Its rooms are large, and if we historians are wise we will follow the precepts of the *Annalistes* and be ready to add more rooms as the occasion suggests. If we are even wiser, we will not, as Braudel sometimes seems to suggest, tear down the rooms we already have, but preserve them as structures, however ill-furnished. One never knows when a historian will come along to make something of them, a Garrett Mattingly, brilliantly to redecorate that stale old attic, diplomatic history. Indeed, in one of his more expansive moments—he has many of them—that is Braudel's view, too.

> At the risk of being taxed with an impenitent liberalism, I say . . . that in order to mount the multiple thresholds of history, all the doors seem to me to be good. None of us knows all of them. At first the historian opens onto the past the door he is most familiar with. But if he wants to see as far as possible, necessarily he will knock on one door, then on another. Each time a new vista will open to him, and he is not worthy of the name historian if he does not juxtapose some of them: cultural and social vistas, cultural and political, social and economic, economic and political.[118]

Histoire problème marches under the standard of elegance; *histoire totale*, under the standard of abundance; but all history and historians worth the name march under the standard of curiosity—and excellence. So, a magnificent entrepreneur of history, a great historian, the author of a marvellous book, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, let Fernand Braudel have the last word. In a thoughtful study he has been seeking to understand and help sociologists understand the relations of history to sociology. He knows, however, that his effort will be in vain unless sociologists grasp history in a way that very few of them have. "I would wish that in the years of their apprenticeship young sociologists would take the

[118] *Annales E.S.C.* 14 (1959): 318–19.

time to study even in the most modest archive the simplest of historical questions; that once at least beyond sterile manuals they might have contact with a craft that is simple but one that cannot be understood without practicing it."[119] Amen!

[119]*Traité de sociologie*, 1:97.